



Mark Henry

County Judge County of Galveston

Galveston County Courthouse
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Wednesday, December 30, 2020

Jorie Klein, Director of EMS/Trauma Systems
Texas Department of State Health Services
1100 West 49th Street
Austin, Texas 78756-3199

Ms. Klein,

Galveston County and Brazoria County would like to formally request that both counties be moved from Trauma Service Area (TSA) – R to TSA-Q. These TSAs are set up by the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) and the South East Texas Regional Advisory Council (SETRAC) with the hospital capacity of these areas currently being used to determine COVID-19 restrictions under Governor Greg Abbott's GA-32 Executive Order.

Currently, TSA-R encompasses counties that stretch from the Texas-Louisiana border to parts of the western Houston Metropolitan Area. This expansive area includes Galveston County, Brazoria County, Jefferson County, Orange County, Newton County, Jasper County, Hardin County, Chambers County, and Liberty County. Both Galveston County and Brazoria County are geographically disconnected from this area with only a small stretch of land connecting the rest of the region. The other counties of the Houston Metropolitan Area, west of Galveston Bay, are included in TSA-Q.

For months now, our local hospitals have been admitting COVID-19 patients from across the state and many of these patients are from TSA-Q. This is due to the close proximity and shared border with Harris County and the rest of TSA-Q. Residents of counties in TSA-Q often work or receive their medical care in the healthcare networks that span the entire Houston region. This is also true of Galveston and Brazoria County residents often travelling to healthcare providers in TSA-Q.

The two main hospital systems for both Galveston County and Brazoria County are the University of Texas Medical Branch and HCA Healthcare. This network of medical facilities stretches across both TSA-Q and our counties. Patients are often transferred across county lines to receive the specialized care unique to them. The current TSA setup splits the hospital capacity of these healthcare networks between two separate regions, skewing data collection and presenting misleading numbers.

The spread of COVID-19 within TSA-Q impacts the residents and hospitals in Galveston County and Brazoria County significantly more than the spread of COVID-19 in TSA-R. The counties on the eastern side of Galveston Bay have their own healthcare networks that are not directly nor indirectly connected to the healthcare networks in our counties.

Date	TSA-R (Per DSHS Data)			Galveston County (Per SETRAC Data)		Brazoria County (Per SETRAC Data)		TSA-Q (Per DSHS Data)		
	Total Beds	# Hospitalized	Rate	# Hospitalized	Rate	# Hospitalized	Rate	Total Beds	# Hospitalized	Rate
9/15/2020	1,888	155	8.21%	48	5.70%	23	5.40%	14,558	607	4.17%
10/15/2020	1,926	146	7.58%	37	4.40%	21	4.50%	15,519	623	4.01%
11/15/2020	1,853	206	11.12%	51	6.00%	39	8.40%	17,191	835	4.86%
12/15/2020	1,156	241	20.85%	87	10.30%	55	11.80%	13,911	1,564	11.24%
12/22/2020	1,336	315	23.58%	99	11.80%	77	16.60%	15,049	1,773	11.78%

The hospitalization rates and bed capacity for Galveston County and Brazoria County have never followed the trends of the rest of TSA-R. Our hospitals consistently have greater capacity and lower rates than the other counties we currently share a region with. Data provided by DSHS supports the argument that the COVID-19 trends of TSA-Q are more closely indicative of the situation on the ground in our counties than the trends of TSA-R.

It is detrimental to our local residents and businesses to have public policy decisions based on public health trends of a region that does not reflect our local situation. It is for these reasons that this request for the change in TSA regions is being submitted.

We appreciate your time in considering this official request and look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,



 Mark Henry
 Galveston County Judge

Matt Sebesta
 Brazoria County Judge

cc: Representative Greg Bonnen
 Representative Mayes Middleton
 Senator Larry Taylor
 Jeff Thibedeau, Chairman of RAC-R
 Darrell Pile, Chief Executive Officer of SETRAC
 David Persse, Chairman of RAC-Q