§ 131E-78.3. Rural emergency hospital.

(a) A hospital licensed under this Article shall notify the Department and the board of commissioners of the county where the hospital is located if the owner, operator, or governing body of the hospital applies for federal designation as a rural emergency hospital.

(b) Before operating as a rural emergency hospital, the owner, operator, or governing body of the hospital shall comply with each of the following:

(1) Submit a plan to the board of commissioners of the county where the hospital is located that includes an assessment of the current and future health care needs of the county and how the rural emergency hospital will support those needs.

(2) Conduct a public hearing at a location within the county. The owner, operator, or governing body of the hospital shall give notice, in writing, to the board of commissioners in that county and by publication in one or more newspapers of general circulation in the affected area describing the intent to convert to a rural emergency hospital. Publication of notice shall be given at least 15 days before the public hearing is held. All interested persons shall be heard at the public hearing.

(c) The conversion of a critical access hospital or acute care hospital to a rural emergency hospital is not subject to certificate of need review under Article 9 of this Chapter. (2023-134, s. 9F.11(b).)