§ 131E-78.5. Stroke center designation.

(a) The Department shall designate hospitals that meet the criteria set forth in this section as an Acute Stroke Ready Hospital, Primary Stroke Center, Thrombectomy-Capable Stroke Center, or Comprehensive Stroke Center. A hospital shall apply to the Department for recognition of such designation and shall demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Department that the hospital meets the applicable criteria set forth in this section.

(a1) The Department shall recognize as many certified acute care hospitals as Acute Stroke Ready Hospitals as apply and are certified as an Acute Stroke Ready Hospital by the American Heart Association, the Joint Commission, or other Department-approved certifying body that is a nationally recognized guidelines-based organization that provides Acute Stroke Ready Hospital certification for stroke care, provided that each applicant continues to maintain its certification.

(a2) The Department shall recognize as many certified acute care hospitals as Primary Stroke Centers as apply and are certified as a Primary Stroke Center by the American Heart Association, the Joint Commission, or other Department-approved certifying body that is a nationally recognized guidelines-based organization that provides Primary Stroke Center Hospital certification for stroke care, provided that each applicant continues to maintain its certification. Further, the Department may recognize those Primary Stroke Centers that offer mechanical endovascular therapies but have not been certified as Thrombectomy-Capable Stroke Centers as "Primary Stroke Centers with endovascular services."

(a3) The Department shall recognize as many certified acute care hospitals as Thrombectomy-Capable Stroke Centers as apply and are certified as a Thrombectomy-Capable Stroke Center by the American Heart Association, the Joint Commission, or other Department-approved certifying body that is a nationally recognized guidelines-based organization that provides Thrombectomy-Capable Stroke Center Hospital certification for stroke care, provided that each applicant continues to maintain its certification.

(a4) The Department shall recognize as many certified acute care hospitals as Comprehensive Stroke Centers as apply and are certified as a Comprehensive Stroke Center by the American Heart Association, the Joint Commission, or other Department-approved certifying body that is a nationally recognized guidelines-based organization that provides Comprehensive Stroke Center Hospital certification for stroke care, provided that each applicant continues to maintain its certification.

(a5) A hospital that is certified by the Joint Commission or other nationally recognized accrediting body that requires conformance to best practices for stroke care in order to be identified as a stroke center shall report the following information to the Department within 90 days of receiving that certification:

(1) The name of the accrediting organization issuing certification to the hospital.
(2) The date of certification.
(3) The level of certification.
(4) The date of renewal of the certification.
(5) The name and phone number of the primary contact person at the hospital who is responsible for obtaining certification.

(b) Each hospital designated as an Acute Stroke Ready Hospital, Primary Stroke Center, Thrombectomy-Capable Stroke Center, or a Comprehensive Stroke Center pursuant to this section shall make efforts to coordinate the provision of appropriate acute stroke care with other hospitals licensed in this State through a formal written agreement. The agreement shall, at a minimum, address (i) transportation of acute stroke patients to hospitals designated as stroke centers and (ii) acceptance by hospitals designated as stroke centers of acute stroke patients initially treated at hospitals that are not capable of providing appropriate stroke care.

(c) The Department shall maintain within the Division of Health Service Regulation, Office of Emergency Services, a list of the hospitals designated as an Acute Stroke Ready Hospital, Primary Stroke Center, Thrombectomy-Capable Stroke Center, or a Comprehensive Stroke Center in accordance with this section and post the list on the Department's website. Annually on June 1, the Department shall transmit this list to the medical director of each licensed emergency medical services provider in this State.

(d) A hospital licensed under this Article shall not advertise or hold itself out to the public as an Acute Stroke Ready Hospital, Primary Stroke Center, Thrombectomy-Capable Stroke Center, or a Comprehensive Stroke Center unless certified as a stroke center by the Joint Commission or other nationally recognized accrediting body that requires conformance to best practices for stroke care in order to be identified as a designated stroke center.

(e) Nothing in this section shall be construed to do any of the following:

(1) Establish a standard of medical practice for stroke patients.

(2) Restrict in any way the authority of any hospital to provide services authorized under its hospital license.

(f) The Department may adopt rules to implement the provisions of this section. (2013-44, s. 1; 2023-137, s. 30; 2025-25, s. 29(5).)