



## NEWS RELEASE

### ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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## Statewide trauma system improves patient outcomes

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Gov. Bob Riley is a strong supporter of Alabama's progress in creating a statewide trauma system. Seventy percent of the state is now covered by Alabama's trauma system. In 2007 the governor pointed out that this trauma system is very critical in reducing deaths and injuries in the "golden hour" after accidents and injuries occur.

"Lives have been saved thanks to the implementation of the statewide trauma system," Governor Riley said. "A number of Alabama hospitals have already joined the system, and I urge other hospitals to come aboard to make sure that patients with a traumatic injury get the very best care. Every second counts during an emergency and the statewide trauma system is there to make sure that hospitals get the appropriate information needed to treat those life-threatening emergencies."

Under this advanced system, injured patients are identified by emergency medical technicians at the scene who route the patient to the closest hospital which has the resources to care for the patient. The EMT contacts the trauma communications center, which knows the current status of all hospitals in the area, so that the patient is routed only to the hospital best capable of caring for him or her.

"This system helps save lives of trauma patients by assuring that the patient is always transported or transferred to the best hospital with the available resources for treatment of their medical condition," said Dr. John Campbell, Medical Director of the Office of EMS and Trauma of the Alabama Department of Public Health. "We hope to have 100 percent coverage by the end of 2009."

The Alabama Legislature approved an expansion of the statewide trauma system, which is under the leadership of the Department of Public Health. Alabama will have the first statewide system of this type in the United States. The system will serve as a model for the nation. Because trauma patients' survival rates improve dramatically when they are evaluated, treated and transported to the correct hospital within the first hour after being injured, this system saves lives.

The system gives hospital and pre-hospital professionals the best opportunity to get patients to the most appropriate hospital in the shortest amount of time. The trauma system also has an ongoing quality improvement process that will help continue to improve patient care in the state.

Participation by hospitals is voluntary. Currently, the Gulf, North Alabama, East Alabama, and Birmingham Regional Emergency Medical Systems provide trauma coverage to 70 percent of the citizens in Alabama, and the Southeast Alabama and West regions will be covered soon.

Trauma is the leading cause of death for Americans under the age of 45. Almost 80 percent of Alabama's trauma cases are caused by motor vehicle crashes. A trauma system is a coordinated system of care that includes emergency medical technicians, a trauma

communications system, hospital emergency department staff, trauma surgeons and other physicians who provide needed surgical and other care. These providers work together to determine the best possible course of action for the injured persons reported through the 911 system.

In March 2007, Alabama established a statewide trauma system with the enactment of Act Number 07-299. This act requires the establishment of Regional Trauma Advisory Councils to work with and advise the State Trauma Advisory Council. The counties in each region are listed here:

**NORTH, REGION 1:** Colbert, Cullman, DeKalb, Franklin, Jackson, Lauderdale, Lawrence, Limestone, Madison, Marshall and Morgan counties.

**EAST, REGION 2:** Calhoun, Chambers, Cherokee, Clay, Cleburne, Coosa, Etowah, Randolph, Talladega and Tallapoosa counties.

**BREMSS, REGION 3:** Blount, Chilton, Jefferson, Shelby, St. Clair, Walker and Winston counties.

**WEST, REGION 4:** Bibb, Choctaw, Fayette, Greene, Hale, Lamar, Marengo, Marion, Perry, Pickens, Sumter and Tuscaloosa counties.

**SOUTHEAST, REGION 5:** Autauga, Barbour, Bullock, Butler, Coffee, Covington, Crenshaw, Dale, Dallas, Elmore, Geneva, Henry, Houston, Lee, Lowndes, Macon, Montgomery, Pike, Russell and Wilcox counties.

**GULF, REGION 6:** Baldwin, Clarke, Conecuh, Escambia, Mobile, Monroe and Washington counties.

For more information contact Dr. John Campbell, EMS and Trauma Medical Director, at (334) 206-5383 or visit [www.adph.org/ems/](http://www.adph.org/ems/)