

New Bedford's St. Luke's Hospital achieves level II trauma center designation

On October 26, St. Luke's Hospital earned official designation from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health as a Level II Adult Trauma Center – the first and only Level II Trauma Center in the Massachusetts EMS Region 5 serving southeastern Massachusetts.

Department of Public Health approval is the final step in establishing a Designated Level II Trauma Center at St. Luke's Hospital for patients in southeastern Massachusetts. St. Luke's Hospital has a full designated trauma team, with surgeons, and clinical resources available 24-7.

"The residents of southeastern Massachusetts need and deserve a trauma center that can provide them with immediate, life-saving care in an emergency, when seconds are critical," said Keith Hovan, President & CEO of Southcoast Health. "Creating a designated trauma center is a rigorous process. Our Level II Trauma Center designation is an achievement reflective of our commitment to our patients and our region, and a direct result of the outstanding leadership and dedication of so many Southcoast Health providers, nurses and staff."

In 2017, Southcoast Health identified the critical need for a trauma center in the South Coast region and embarked upon the journey with a full assessment of resources that would be required, followed by months of planning and internal investment, officials said.

Our Emergency Medical Service (EMS) partners play a critical role in the trauma response, serving on the frontlines and safely transporting patients to the appropriate health care facilities for care. With official state designation the

trauma center will now be able to accept more patients from Emergency Medical Services (EMS) within southeastern Massachusetts, providing patients with faster care and closer to home in an emergency.

“When a hospital commits to being a trauma center, it’s a reflection of that hospital’s commitment to providing comprehensive care and service to the community,” said Dr. Michael Grossman, Chief of Trauma Surgery at Southcoast Health.

As a first step in the process, St. Luke’s Hospital was closely evaluated and achieved verification as a Level II Trauma Center by the Verification Review Committee (VRC), an ad hoc committee of the Committee on Trauma (COT) of the American College of Surgeons (ACS) earlier this fall.

Verified Trauma Centers must meet the essential criteria that ensure trauma care capability and institutional performance, as outlined by the American College of Surgeons’ Committee on Trauma in its current Resources for Optimal Care of the Injured Patient manual.

According to the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), traumatic injuries are the leading cause of death for individuals up to 45 years old. In an emergency, every second counts and victims of traumatic injuries often find themselves in a race against time.

“One of the main tenants in trauma is that you have a small window of time to provide lifesaving interventions and make a difference when somebody is critically injured,” says Stephanie Raby, MSN, RN, PHN, the Trauma Program Manager at St. Luke’s Hospital. “The St. Luke’s Trauma Center will help provide patients with faster access to evaluation and advanced critical care in an emergency.”

A Level II Trauma Center is equipped to see any type of trauma patient, but is not required to conduct research or have

surgical residency programs. The American Trauma Society explains the differences between each trauma center level here.

“Previously, for the South Coast region, the closest designated trauma center is out of state in Rhode Island, a significant drive away,” says Dr. Theodore Delmonico, a Trauma Surgeon at St. Luke’s Hospital. “Not only is a lengthy transport dangerous for a very sick or traumatically injured patient, but it also takes that ambulance out of commission for some time, limiting the resources available to other patients in need within the region.”

To learn more about the St. Luke’s Level II Trauma Center please visit www.southcoast.org/southcoast-health-trauma-center/.

About Southcoast Health

Celebrating the system’s 25th anniversary in 2021, Southcoast Health is a not-for-profit, charitable organization and the largest provider of primary and specialty care in the region, serving communities in Rhode Island and across Southeastern Massachusetts. Southcoast Health is a Newsweek’s World’s Best Hospital in 2019, 2020, and 2021. Out of the 2,743 considered hospitals in the United States, only 250 earned this recognition. In 2020 and 2021, St. Luke’s is a Newsweek and Leapfrog’s Best Maternity Hospitals. US News ranks Southcoast 9th among hospitals in Massachusetts, and 2nd among those in the Providence Metro area. In 2019 and 2020, the Southcoast Health system also received seven awards, including Best Hospitals and Best Place to Work, in SouthCoast Media Group’s Best of the Best Awards voted on by residents and readers.

As a network of more than 700 physicians, hospitalists, and mid-level practitioners, Southcoast Health is a system of

three acute care hospitals – Charlton Memorial Hospital in Fall River, St. Luke’s Hospital in New Bedford, and Tobey Hospital in Wareham, and also provides behavioral health services in partnership with Acadia at Southcoast Behavioral Health in Dartmouth. Southcoast Health’s System comprises seven Urgent Care Centers, two Centers for Cancer Care, visiting nurse association, and numerous additional ambulatory facilities that offer convenience and access to services for more than 724,000 residents in 33 communities covering over 900 square miles in Southeastern Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

With 7,500 employees, Southcoast Health is the largest employer in Southeastern Mass., and one of the largest employers in the Commonwealth, according to the Boston Business Journal. Southcoast Health is proud of our mission of providing high-quality, affordable healthcare to our patients and proud of our tradition of eliminating the barriers that prevent access to care. More information is available online at www.southcoast.org. Connect to Southcoast Health through social media on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Southcoast® is a registered trademark of Southcoast Health System.

Southcoast Hospitals Group, which includes Charlton Memorial Hospital, St. Luke’s Hospital and Tobey Hospital, is a 2020 Newsweek’s World’s Best Hospital.