

CHAPTER 98-21

House Bill No. 3231

An act relating to rural hospitals; amending ss. 395.602 and 408.07, F.S.; revising a definition; requiring a study; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Paragraph (e) of subsection (2) of section 395.602, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

395.602 Rural hospitals.—

(2) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this part:

(e) “Rural hospital” means an acute care hospital licensed under this chapter, ~~having with 85 or fewer licensed beds and or less, which has an emergency room, and is~~ located in an area defined as rural by the United States Census, and which is:

1. The sole provider within a county with a population density of no greater than 100 persons per square mile; or

2. An acute care hospital, in a county with a population density of no greater than 100 persons per square mile, which is at least 30 minutes of travel time, on normally traveled roads under normal traffic conditions, from any other acute care hospital within the same county; or

3. A hospital supported by a tax district or subdistrict whose boundaries encompass a population of 100 persons or fewer less per square mile.

Population densities used in this paragraph must be based upon the most recently completed United States census.

Section 2. Subsection (47) of section 408.07, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

408.07 Definitions.—As used in this chapter, with the exception of ss. 408.031-408.045, the term:

(47) “Rural hospital” means an acute care hospital licensed under chapter 395, ~~having with 85 or fewer licensed beds and or fewer, which has an emergency room, and is~~ located in an area defined as rural by the United States Census, and which is:

(a) The sole provider within a county with a population density of no greater than 100 persons per square mile;

(b) An acute care hospital, in a county with a population density of no greater than 100 persons per square mile, which is at least 30 minutes of travel time, on normally traveled roads under normal traffic conditions, from another acute care hospital within the same county; or

(c) A hospital supported by a tax district or subdistrict whose boundaries encompass a population of 100 persons or fewer less per square mile.

Population densities used in this subsection must be based upon the most recently completed United States census.

Section 3. The Agency for Health Care Administration is directed to evaluate, in consultation with the Department of Health and representatives of the hospital industry, the adequacy of the statutory definition of "rural hospital" as defined in ss. 395.602 and 408.07, Florida Statutes. In its analysis the agency may consider economic and demographic factors, federal rules and regulations, health planning principles, and the potential impact of alternative definitions on the communities that contain rural hospitals as currently defined. The agency shall submit its findings and recommendations to the Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the President of the Senate no later than December 31, 1999.

Section 4. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.

Became a law without the Governor's approval April 22, 1998.

Filed in Office Secretary of State April 21, 1998.