



WETZEL COUNTY HOSPITAL

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

From: **GEORGE COUCH, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

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Phone: **304-455-8111**

WETZEL COUNTY HOSPITAL TRAUMA SERVICE RE-CERTIFIED

New Martinsville, WV – The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Services recently re-designated Wetzel County Hospital as a Level IV Trauma Center. Wetzel County Hospital is the only trauma-designated facility in Wetzel County and one of only 13 hospitals in West Virginia to receive a full three-year designation.

Wetzel County Hospital is in the middle of a \$2.6 million project to triple the size of its emergency department and double the number of emergency beds from six to twelve and is in the process of adding a full-time trauma helicopter base of operations at the hospital.

In order to qualify as a trauma center in America, a hospital must meet certain criteria as established by the American College of Surgeons (ACS). A trauma center is a hospital equipped to provide comprehensive emergency medical services to patients suffering traumatic injuries. Trauma centers were established as the medical establishment realized that traumatic injuries often require complex and multi-disciplinary treatment, including surgery in order to give the victim the best possible chance for survival and recovery.

Being a Level IV Trauma Designated facility enables Wetzel County Hospital to treat seriously injured patients, stabilize them and then transport the patient to a trauma center that handles higher acuity cases if needed.

“We strive to be the first place anyone in the surrounding area considers for care,” said Marge Knight, R.N., Chief Nurse Executive for Emergency and Outpatient Services at Wetzel

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County Hospital. "In an emergency, such as an injury, stroke or heart attack, minutes matter and Wetzel County Hospital the most convenient choice in our area."

The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Services noted in the report that Wetzel County Hospital's strengths included: administrative support for the trauma program; the availability of general surgery; trauma team activation policies and procedures; trauma and pediatric related education for the emergency department nursing staff and the Wetzel County Hospital trauma medical professional team of Jeffry Pilney, M.D. chief trauma surgeon; Brian Gullet, D.O. Chief of Emergency and Trauma Services and Lisha Morris, R.N. Trauma Coordinator.

"Our trauma designation is one more way we provide quality health care services to Wetzel, Tyler Counties in West Virginia and Monroe County, Ohio," said hospital C.E.O. George Couch. "While we provide education throughout the community to help lower the incidence of injuries, we realize that accidents happen and are proud to be able to provide care for seriously injured patients when necessary."

Trauma is any life-threatening occurrence, either accidental or intentional, that causes injuries. The leading causes of trauma are motor vehicle accidents, falls, and assaults. Trauma is the leading cause of death among Americans under 44 years of age according to the American College of Surgeons.

To earn the designation, the hospital must have the necessary equipment and resources for trauma cases. Hospital staff must constantly review trauma cases, which enables staff to provide care based on the best practices of trauma centers across the country.

Also, the hospital must staff radiology, surgery and other departments to immediately treat trauma patients. Doctors and nurses must pass advanced trauma classes to provide patients with the latest procedures. All emergency department nursing staff at Wetzel County Hospital are credentialed in Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS); Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS); Neonatal Advanced Life Support (NRP); and advanced Trauma Nurse Core Course (TNCC).

Wetzel County Hospital is a licensed and accredited, 68-bed hospital, offering comprehensive acute care inpatient, outpatient services, emergency department and transitional care unit. The emergency department treats over 12,000 patients per year. The hospital is located 35 miles south of Wheeling and 60 miles north of Parkersburg, West Virginia.

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