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## Methodist Hospital for Surgery in Addison gets Medicare provider number in nick of time

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By **JASON ROBERSON** / The Dallas Morning News  
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For Methodist Health System, it was a race against the clock with \$60 million and potentially hundreds of jobs at stake.

Executives at the Dallas-based hospital group faced a federally imposed deadline for constructing, equipping, staffing and obtaining the necessary licenses for a 32-bed surgical hospital in Addison.

Their deadline: today.

They made it – but it was close.

A year ago, top executives at the not-for-profit health system began planning the hospital in Addison, but the new health care law signed in March threatened to unplug their project because physicians have investor stakes in it.

In an attempt to save money and reduce fraud, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act tries to limit the growth of physician-owned hospitals. If a physician-owned hospital wants to participate in the Medicare program – the government insurance for the elderly – it had to be open and certified by today.

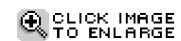
Several hospitals will not make the cut. Some, including the Texas Spine and Joint Hospital in Tyler, have filed lawsuits contesting the health care law.

"It is crazy for the federal government to limit this ability," said Dr. Michael Russell, president of Physician Hospitals of America and an investor in the Texas Spine and Joint Hospital.

The \$60 million, 100,000-square-foot Methodist Hospital for Surgery originally was to open in January 2011 at the earliest. It would specialize in spine and orthopedic surgeries.

But when [President Barack Obama](#) signed the health care law on March 23, executives at Methodist had a decision to make: Should they scrap the project and ignore months of legwork, or should they work faster to beat the deadline?

They chose to go for it.



MONA REEDER/DMN  
**The Methodist Hospital for Surgery on [North Dallas](#) Parkway in [Addison](#)** raced against a federal deadline of today to get the facility, which has physician investors, licensed and approved in time to get the required Medicare provider number.

"As soon as we knew the deadline date, we had an all-hands-on-deck meeting," said Michael Arvin, Methodist's chief development officer. "We all looked at each other and said we're going to work backwards from Dec. 31, 2010."

At the April 1 meeting, Arvin assembled everyone necessary for completing the hospital. Sitting at the table were physician investors, the developer, architect, the company that would manage the hospital and Addison's planning and zoning department.

Together they implemented an accelerated development plan. Sacrifices were made. Rogers-O'Brien Construction Co. doubled its usual pace for such projects, using two 10-hour shifts for six days a week.

Architect BOKA Powell used new technology that allows architectural drawings to sync with construction drawings in real time. This produced the necessary information for general contractors at a quicker pace.

Chris Shoup, the hospital president, was hired in July, and he immediately began hiring his staff.

With time running out, hospital officials altered conventional ways of training staff members.

For instance, instead of waiting for construction to be fully completed, hospital equipment was scheduled for delivery after each construction phase. This gave staff more time to train on new equipment to earn necessary certifications.

Moving at warp speed enabled Methodist to secure the state-required Certificate of Occupancy from Addison on Oct. 1. It also received necessary licenses from the Texas [Department of Health](#), allowing it to open for business earlier this month.

Still, Methodist needed certification by today from the U.S. [Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services](#) in order to accept Medicare patients.

Surveyors from the federal agency visited for two days in late November to review the hospital's certifications and business plans.

It was up to the surveyors to determine whether the hard work paid off or was all in vain.

On Wednesday, Methodist learned the federal government had issued it a Medicare provider number – just in the nick of time.

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