



# KEY DRC MESSAGES

## HEALTH CARE

*For your reference as an attendee – not to leave behind with lawmakers/staff*

### About the Dallas Region and the Dallas Regional Chamber's Legislative Priorities

- The Dallas Regional Chamber serves as the voice of the business community in our region. We represent over **700 member companies employing more than 600,000 Texans**, and we were named the National Chamber of the Year last summer.
- The strength of Texas' economy is driven by the strength of the Dallas Region's economy. **222 companies have moved their headquarters to the Dallas Region since 2010, and 1.3 million new jobs have been created in the region.** That's more than one new company a month every month for 12 years.
- The Dallas Region's economy is the most diverse of any large market in the U.S. **Of the last 10 Fortune 500 companies to move to the region, eight have come from different sectors.**
- The Dallas Region is the fourth-largest market in the U.S. with a population of 7.8 million, and we're projected to pass Chicago in about 10 years. **It will be vital this legislative session to make the commitments we need to keep our region and state an attractive place to live, work, and do business.**
- The DRC's legislative priorities focus on pro-business, pro-growth policies that ensure continued prosperity while maintaining a high quality of life for all. **Our agenda for this session outlines our region's needs in economic development, education and workforce, health care, and quality of life.** It is the result of several months of engagement with our member companies and community partners across a variety of industries.
- The agenda is very focused on workforce development. With labor shortages and job market competition, the business community prioritizes policies that will help develop the talent pipeline for the jobs of both today and the future.

### Issue Area #1: Addressing Labor Shortages

***DRC agenda language:** Support innovative approaches to addressing current health care labor shortages and creating a robust pipeline for future health care talent.*

### Lead Introduction

- COVID has obviously impacted our health care workforce in a significant way. Labor shortages have compounding effects in both patient care and medical research and advancement.
- Three in ten health care workers have considered leaving their profession, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation.
- Willingness and ability for health care workers to leave their current jobs highlights the pressure on health systems to provide increased wages and improved working conditions.



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## Request

- Innovative policies that help add more nurses, techs, doctors and other medical professionals is an important piece of addressing the effects of the pandemic and future public health needs.

## Talking Points

- The Dallas Region is home to world-renowned health care and research institutions, including eight hospital systems and six nationally ranked research universities.
- Dallas' medical district serves 2.8 million patients every year.
- The Dallas Region has the seventh-most life science and biotech jobs in the U.S., and DFW International Airport has a new 37,000-square-foot cold chain storage facility that makes it easy for time-sensitive therapies and pharmaceuticals to be made and shipped from here to waiting patients.
- A survey by the American Hospital Association found that one of the top challenges and reasons for health care staffing shortages reported by nurses was “emotional health and wellbeing of staff.”

## Issue Area #2: Expanding Access

**DRC agenda language:** Support policies that increase access to quality care options and promote the health and well-being of Texas businesses and their workers.

## Lead Introduction

- Texans need health care coverage AND access to quality care, and that includes the best and brightest doctors and medical professionals in the field.

## Request

- Long-term, sustainable investments in Texas' broadband infrastructure will increase telehealth and telemedicine options for patients, which provides more flexibility and greater access to preventive care.

## Talking points

- Providing people options with health care, like the convenience of having a doctor's appointment online at home, is important to the future health of Texans.
- With the federal public health emergency (PHE) set to expire, state health agencies will need to reevaluate coverage eligibility for millions of Texans.

## Issue Area #3: Improving Behavioral Health Services

**DRC agenda language:** Fund the expansion of behavioral health services that address the full continuum of care, including the expansion of inpatient facilities and additional outpatient programs at all levels.



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## Lead Introduction

- The need for behavioral health services across Texas has never been greater – in the Dallas Region, there are only about five state-supported inpatient hospital beds per 100,000 residents, less than half the national average.
- Last session, the DRC was proud to lead a coalition of more than 30 organizations to help secure funding for a 200-bed state behavioral health hospital serving our region, operated by UT Southwestern.

## Request

- Thanks to the Legislature and members of the Dallas Regional Delegation, initial funding was secured, but further funding is needed this session to complete and operate the hospital: \$102 million to complete construction and \$68.5 million for ramp-up operations.

## Talking Points

- Currently, the nearest state hospital to the DFW metro is the 305-bed Terrell State Hospital, which is almost 60 miles east of Dallas Fort Worth International Airport and cares for individuals on a longer-term basis.
- A need for a regional state behavioral health hospital was identified by the state in 2014.
- More capacity is vital to meeting growing demand for services as our population expands and wait times grow.