

April 26, 2023

The Honorable Joan Huffman  
P.O. Box 12068  
Austin, TX 78711

The Honorable Greg Bonnen  
P.O. Box 2910  
Austin, TX 78711

CC:

The Honorable Brandon Creighton  
The Honorable Mary Gonzalez  
The Honorable Jacey Jetton  
The Honorable Lois Kolkhorst

The Honorable Robert Nichols  
The Honorable Charles Schwertner  
The Honorable Gary VanDeaver  
The Honorable Amando Walle

Dear Chairwoman Huffman and Chairman Bonnen,

Thank you for your continued service to make Texas the best place to live, work, and do business for all Texans this legislative session.

As you and your colleagues deliberate priorities for the 2024-2025 biennium, we **urge you to appropriate the full funding request for the completion and operation of the behavioral health hospital in Dallas in Article II.**

Last session, the DRC was proud to lead a coalition of more than 30 organizations from across the region in asking lawmakers for funding for a behavioral health hospital in Dallas, a need that was identified by the state in 2014. With the support of the 87<sup>th</sup> Legislature and the Dallas Regional Delegation, \$44.8 million was secured for the planning and land acquisition costs and \$238 million was secured through American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars.

The need for behavioral health services across Texas has never been greater- in the Dallas region, there are only about five state inpatient hospital beds per 100,000 residents, less than half of the national average. Due to inflation and rising construction costs, **\$101.9 million in additional funding is needed to complete the construction of the facility and \$68.5 million for ramp up operations.**

This new facility will be operated by the world-renowned UT Southwestern Medical Center and will reduce wait times for North Texans seeking urgent mental health care. Presently, the Terrell State Hospital serves the psychiatric health needs of 25 counties in one of the most populous areas of the state. With demand for mental health services surging in North Texas as the result of rapid population growth, a declining supply of service providers, and adverse mental health impacts stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic, patients must often wait days or even weeks for treatment.

Thank you very much for your thoughtful consideration of this request, and for all you do for the State of Texas. On behalf of the Dallas Regional Chamber's 700-plus member companies, I applaud your leadership in working on the 2024-2025 state budget. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Matt Garcia, our Senior Vice President of Public Policy, at [mgarcia@dallaschamber.org](mailto:mgarcia@dallaschamber.org) or 214-746-6721.

Sincerely,

Dale Petroskey, Dallas Regional Chamber  
Rafael Lizardi, Texas Instruments  
Bob Pragada, Jacobs  
Chris Nielsen, Toyota Motor North America  
Sean Donohue, DFW Airport  
Marissa Jarratt, 7-Eleven  
The Honorable Margaret Spellings, Texas 2036  
Kelvin Walker, Dallas Citizens Council  
James Scoggins, Methodist Health System  
Martin Yung, HUB International  
Peter Brodsky, Red Bird Dallas  
Mandy Price, Kanarys  
Hussain Manjee, DHD Films  
Cristina Criado, Criado Associates  
John Stephens, M&J Lupton Investments, LLC  
Tonya Veasey, Open Channels Group  
Sara Madsen Miller, 1820 Productions  
Urmil Shah, Asian Chamber of Texas  
Mary Ann Kellam, Irving Hispanic Chamber of Commerce