

# TEXAS COLLEGE *of* EMERGENCY PHYSICIANS

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## **EMERGENCY MEDICINE PHYSICIANS ANNOUNCE SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN DOCTORS PROVIDING EMERGENCY CARE ACROSS TEXAS**

### *2003 Medical Liability Reforms Credited with Rise in Emergency Physicians*

AUSTIN, Texas –The Texas College of Emergency Physicians (TCEP) announced a dramatic rise in Texans' access to emergency medical care at a press conference held this morning at the State Capitol. Senator Troy Fraser reported that the state's gains in emergency physicians result directly from medical liability reforms passed in 2003.

"I am thrilled that my constituents in the counties I represent now have access to board-certified emergency physicians providing critical care where previously they had none or very limited access to this care," said Senator Fraser. "House Bill 4 has produced the results we were aiming for when we passed medical liability reforms during the 78<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature."

Data released by the Texas Department of State Health Services, the Office of Rural Community Affairs, the Texas Medical Board and the Texas Alliance for Patient Access quantifies this significant increase in board-certified emergency physicians in Texas. Seventy-six counties have experienced a net gain in emergency physicians since the passage of medical liability reforms five years ago, including 39 medically underserved counties and 30 counties that are partially medically underserved.

Patients requiring emergency medical care in rural Texas counties, in particular, have benefited from medical liability reforms. Twenty-four counties that did not have an emergency medicine physician prior to the passage of House Bill 4 now do, and twenty-two of these 24 counties are rural.

Thirty-three rural Texas counties have added at least one emergency medicine physician since these medical liability reforms were passed into law. These counties include Anderson, Blanco, Brewster, Burnet, Camp, Colorado, Concho, Cooke, Deaf Smith, Eastland, Fayette, Franklin, Freestone, Grimes, Hood, Hopkins, Hutchinson, Jasper,

Lamar, Limestone, Llano, Mills, Montague, Nacogdoches, Panola, Polk, Scurry, Titus, Val Verde, Walker, Wheeler and Wood.

At today's press conference, Dr. Robert Greenberg thanked Texas legislators on behalf of all TCEP members for these reforms. The reforms have saved lives by helping ensure Texas patients have access to critical emergency care.

"While other states in the nation are losing doctors in droves, Texas is experiencing a noteworthy and admirable rise in the number of physicians treating patients, especially those needing emergency care," said Dr. Greenberg. "I do not think it's an overstatement to call House Bill 4 the 'Texas Medical Miracle.'"

The Texas Legislature passed House Bill 4, which contained medical liability reforms designed to ensure Texans' access to high-quality medical care in 2003. As a result, 43 metropolitan counties and 33 rural counties have seen a net gain in emergency physicians.

"These numbers show that the healthcare liability reforms passed in 2003 work: the Texas Legislature has increased patient access to emergency medical care, especially in the parts of our state that need emergency physicians the most," said Josie R. Williams, MD, President of the Texas Medical Association. "Our task now is to protect the progress we've made and continue our momentum in expanding the number of emergency physicians serving Texas."

The Texas College of Emergency Physicians Board of Directors and Members are a diverse group of practicing emergency physicians all dedicated to the shared goal of furthering the emergency medicine specialty in Texas. As a strong, unified professional organization, TCEP takes action to empower emergency physicians and protect patients.

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