



Legislative Priorities

85th Legislative Session (2017)

- **Increase & Preserve Funding for the Trauma System**

The population of Texas has grown more than 63 percent in the past 25 years. At a time of growing demands on the system, state funding has been stagnant or declining. Rural and frontier communities already are experiencing a lack of access to timely emergency healthcare. Urban areas have more resources but still struggle to maintain services. If Texas wants to maintain its unique, highly effective trauma and emergency healthcare system, the Legislature must ensure a more adequate, stable funding stream to support Emergency Medical Services, Regional Advisory Councils, designated hospitals and the Emergency Medical Task Force.

The majority of state funding for the trauma and emergency healthcare system is currently generated through the Driver Responsibility Program (DRP). Therefore, it would be irresponsible to repeal the DRP without enacting a program to generate comparable funding.

- **Dedicated Funding for Regional Advisory Councils**

The twenty-two Regional Advisory Councils (RACs) have been hit hard by recent funding cuts. These unique entities unite competing healthcare providers to develop, implement, maintain and continuously improve regional trauma and emergency healthcare plans. This critical component of the system needs to be adequately financed and expanded to improve patient outcomes and save lives. The state-mandated responsibilities of the RACs have expanded, despite minimal state funding. The continued functions of the RACs are threatened without additional state funds. An additional, specific appropriation to the RACs would allow for increased regional coordination to ensure that all Texans are given the best chance of survival when facing an emergency healthcare situation.

- **Replace the Trauma & Emergency Healthcare Funds Appropriated from the Tobacco Fund (Fund 5046)**

In 2011, the \$100 million corpus of the Permanent Tobacco Fund for EMS and Trauma Care was raided to provide funding for the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT). This action has left Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Regional Advisory Councils (RACs) without the funds they need to save lives in emergency situations. Previous appropriations of the interest from this tobacco fund provided several million per year for local project grants to support EMS and coordination of regional trauma and emergency healthcare through the RACs. At the end of the 2016-17 biennium, approximately \$11.6 million will remain in Fund 5046. This fund no longer can produce the interest needed to provide a perpetual source of funds for EMS providers and the 22 RACs. The provision allowing the diversion of funds must be repealed, and the money restored, even if it takes several sessions to fully restore the \$100 million corpus.