

The Texas Legislature enacted the Texas Trauma System 35 years ago. This system has saved countless lives. The people who make up the system are why it is exceptional, but the life-saving efforts of these trauma leaders only goes as far as the resources, which continue to be tapped. The Texas Trauma System can no longer be maintained at the same level with increased demands on trauma, emergency, and disaster-related health care services in urban and rural areas.

The health care system in Texas cannot stretch its resources at the current growth pace; and when disasters hit, Regional Advisory Councils (RACs), EMS, hospitals, and the Texas Emergency Medical Task Force serve as frontline responders. Each aspect of the trauma and emergency health care system – RACs, EMS providers, and hospitals – must be adequately funded to support all Texans when unplanned needs arise.

Strengthening our health care system must encompass all aspects of time-sensitive care, including the data and resources needed to provide better quality care for mothers and newborns in Texas.

TETAF supports funding that recognizes the need to strengthen regional health care systems through the following priorities:

Acknowledgement of the Critical Role of the Regional Advisory Councils

RACs are vital and complex entities that coordinate and integrate trauma, prehospital, perinatal, stroke, cardiac and disaster readiness into the emergency health care system. Proportional funding increases are integral for the RACs to meet the demands of the fastest growing state and the expanding scope of regional health care responsibilities.

Increase Funding to the Texas Trauma System

Trauma care funding established more than 20 years ago has played a crucial role in supporting the Texas Trauma System. Uncompensated trauma care has increased at a substantial pace while reimbursements to these facilities have decreased, outpacing the dollars available. Increasing trauma funding is paramount to sustaining the Texas Trauma System.

Establish a Statewide Perinatal Database

While it is believed that levels of care designations for neonatal and maternal care have improved care for mothers and babies, Texas still lacks the granular, patient-level perinatal data to assess and improve care. Texas should fund the establishment of a statewide perinatal database to assess, implement, and evaluate best practices for better outcomes.

Improve and Fund Regional Health Care Data Collection Efforts

RACs' access to statewide data has lacked robust, timely value to truly impact responses and improve patient outcomes. Therefore, RACs have initiated regional data collection to improve trauma, cardiac and stroke outcomes. Funding should be allocated for regional registries that can align to a common statewide data set.