



The Senate of Texas

CÉSAR J. BLANCO

TEXAS SENATOR
DISTRICT 29

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

April 17, 2023

Contact: Taylor Sanchez

915.276.3872

Taylor.sanchez@senate.texas.gov

Senator César J. Blanco Announces Historic Funding for Mental & Behavioral Health for El Paso Region

Austin, Texas – Today, the Texas Senate adopted the Senate version of House Bill 1, the State Budget, which includes over \$115 million for the redesign and expansion of the El Paso Psychiatric Center (EPPC) State Hospital System. House Bill 1 will now return to the Texas House of Representatives for appointment of a conference committee to reconcile differences between the House and Senate versions of the state budget.

According to a behavioral health assessment conducted in 2021, patients admitted to EPPC spent more than 520 days waiting for a forensic bed – more than two times the wait at any other state hospital. With this historic funding, EPPC will receive the resources to provide 50 new mental health beds and fund the design and construction of a new modern facility to better meet the mental health needs of the community.

Senator Blanco issued the following statement:

“This is the largest amount of state funding ever appropriated for mental and behavioral health in the El Paso region. This funding is the culmination of months of collaboration with Senate Leadership and the Senate Committee on Finance, and I am pleased to have secured this funding in the Senate version of the state budget. I look forward to working with the budget conference committee to reconcile Senate and House differences.

“While this funding is a giant leap forward in addressing El Paso’s mental health needs, I look forward to continuing to work with our local community leaders to make improvements and expand high-quality mental health care to families in our community.”

Sharon Butterworth, Founding Chair of the El Paso Behavioral Health Consortium issued the following statement:

“The El Paso Behavioral Health Consortium is grateful for the efforts of the El Paso Delegation and all state legislators who are working to expand and enhance State Hospital Systems of care to support future needs. This is about more than a new facility – this is an opportunity to change the way we deliver care and design a local behavioral health system that improves the delivery of mental health services for the El Paso region.”

Kristen Daugherty, CEO of Emergency Health Network issued the following statement:

“I wish to thank the Legislature and especially the El Paso delegation for their commitment to advancing behavioral health systems in Texas. As the CEO of Emergence Health Network, the Local Mental Health Authority for El Paso County, I believe this significant investment will greatly improve the lives of justice-involved Texans living with mental illness.”

For further information, please contact Taylor Sanchez at 915-276-3872 or Taylor.Sanchez@senate.texas.gov.