

**A strong handshake and an eyeball-to-eyeball visit are worth more than 100 emails.**

LINDA VILLARREAL, MD  
EDINBURG INTERNIST

## WHO WE ARE

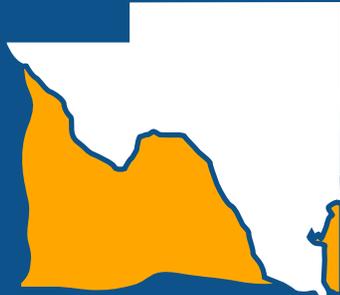
Physician leaders from El Paso to Brownsville and from Corpus Christi and San Antonio united in 2001 to establish the Border Health Caucus (BHC).

Our mission: Ensure lawmakers in Austin and Washington, D.C., understand the unique health challenges facing the Texas Border and improve access to care for its residents.

BHC fought relentlessly for landmark state tort reform – passed in 2003 – that has attracted more physicians to the region. Now, more patients get the quality care they need, when they need it.

In 2010, BHC helped convince Congress to stop a 21-percent cut in Medicare rates.

But challenges remain, and the coalition's work continues: In 2017, BHC helped pass state legislation creating the Task Force of Border Health Officials to recommend short- and long-term state Border health plans. Two BHC members sit on the task force.



# THE BORDER HEALTH CAUCUS IS HEALTH CARE'S CHAMPION ON THE BORDER



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Despite advances, the demand for health care far outstrips supply and access. The Texas Border region has one of the lowest rates of physicians per capita to care for its sick, promote healthy behaviors, and prevent disease.

## 100% OF THE REGION IS DESIGNATED AS A HEALTH PROFESSIONAL SHORTAGE AREA AND MEDICALLY UNDERSERVED AREA.

At the same time, needs on the Border are great. The region tops the nation's charts for its high rates of residents who live in poverty or are uninsured, and who are obese or diabetic, or have other chronic health care challenges and worries about long-term care.

- **29.3%** of Border Texans are below poverty level.
- **46.1%** of Border adults aged 18-64 have no health insurance.
- **\$3 billion-plus** in productivity is lost annually to chronic illness.
- Health care for chronic illness costs the state **\$2 billion-plus annually.**

## BHC RECOMMENDATIONS

Sound public policy can help remove health care disparities, prevent chronic disease, and reduce health care costs on the Texas Border.

### BHC calls on state and federal lawmakers and policymakers to:

- Strengthen the border's public health infrastructure.
- Improve patients' access to physicians by shoring up the health care workforce.
- Fix Medicare so it is sustainable and can better serve the seniors, people with disabilities, and military families who depend on it for health care.

## HOW YOU CAN PARTICIPATE

**Annual Visits to the Hill.** BHC physicians take their concerns and solutions to Washington, D.C., to raise awareness and ask Congress for specific actions.

**Border Health Conference.** Alternating between Washington, D.C., and a Texas Border city, this annual event brings together physicians, federal and state officials, hospitals, health plans, and community leaders to find solutions to barriers to health care.

**First Tuesdays at the Capitol.** Each legislative session, physicians travel to the state Capitol to educate legislators about issues facing their patients and their profession.

# TEXAS BORDER REGION

The Texas Border Region is part of the larger Texas-Mexico border region – one community in two countries separated by a boundary.



THE BORDER REGION  
IS HOME TO  
**3 MILLION**

RESIDENTS  
WITHIN

**62.5**  
MILES

OF TEXAS'  
BOUNDARY WITH  
MEXICO.

THE REGION  
ENCOMPASSES

**32**  
TEXAS  
COUNTIES,



OF WHICH  
**15**  
LINE THE  
BORDER.

THE BORDER REGION IS  
BIGGER THAN THE STATE  
OF **FLORIDA**, STRETCHING

**1,254**  
MILES

FROM EL PASO  
TO BROWNSVILLE.

Sources: Texas Department of State Health Services



## LEADERSHIP

Luis Urrea, MD – Chair

Victor Gonzalez, MD – Vice Chair

## *Border Health Caucus Member Societies*

Bexar County Medical Society

Big Bend County Medical Society

Cameron-Willacy County Medical Society

El Paso County Medical Society

Fort Duncan Regional Medical Center

Hidalgo-Starr County Medical Society

Kleberg-Kenedy County Medical Society

Maverick County Medical Society

Nueces County Medical Society

Tri County Medical Society

Val Verde County Medical Society

Webb-Zapata-Jim Hogg County Medical Society

## BORDER HEALTH CAUCUS

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915-533-0940

### McAllen Office

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*Working to bring good health to  
the Texas-Mexico Border*