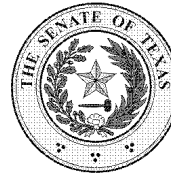




STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
**TRAVIS CLARDY**

DISTRICT 11



**Senator Robert Nichols**

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August 10, 2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Sen. Nichols and Rep. Clardy Advocate for Rusk State Hospital**

Austin, TX — Today, Senator Robert Nichols (R-Jacksonville) and Representative Travis Clardy (R-Nacogdoches) spoke to Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) leaders to advocate for funding for new construction for Rusk State Hospital. Local leaders from Rusk also spoke at the Commission meeting.

During the 85th Legislative Session, the Legislature appropriated \$300 million for the implementation of new constructions projects at state hospitals. Extensive studies, including the CanonDesign Analysis for the Department of State Health Services Ten Year Plan, identified Rusk among the first facilities to be improved with the allocated funding.

"This state hospital has been forced to provide care for its residents with outdated and inadequate buildings. These facilities do not meet the needs of the residents or employees who work there," said Nichols. "I strongly urge HHSC leaders to move swiftly towards obligating the allocated funding before December 2018, and ensure Rusk State Hospital is among the first phase of construction projects."

There is a significant backlog for patients awaiting transfer out of county jails. If funding is allocated, and through its partnership with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Rusk State Hospital will be best suited and able to reduce these backlogs and meet the immediate needs of the state for maximum security beds.

"The construction of a new Rusk State Hospital is vital to our ability to provide quality compassionate care to citizens suffering from serious mental illness," said Clardy. "No community in Texas understands this mission better, nor is better suited, to set the standard for the next generation to state health facilities."

There is a unique relationship between Rusk State Hospital and its local communities as they provide vital services to not only surrounding areas, but also to many rural areas across East Texas. Partnerships with the University of Texas Health Northeast and Tyler Junior college have established psychiatry and psychology residency programs, financial scholarships, and other partnerships for charitable foundations and employees. This cannot be found anywhere else in Texas.

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Photo Attached: L-R

Bobby Garmon, Citizens First Bank, City of Rusk Mayor Angela Raiborn, DSHS Deputy Commissior  
Mike Maples, Senator Robert Nichols, University of Texas System, Chief Medical Officer and  
Associate Vice Chancellor Dr. David Lakey, President, Citizens First Bank in Rusk Charles Hassell,  
Representative Travis Clardy, HHSC Deputy CommissionerStephenie Muth