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**Senator Lucio Statement on UT Board of Regents Votes to
Develop South Texas School of Medicine
and to Create New University**

Today, The University of Texas Board of Regents voted to allocate \$100 million (approximately \$10 million per year for the next 10 years) toward the development of a South Texas school of medicine. Additionally, the Board voted to seek authorization from the state legislature to create a new university which would incorporate The University of Texas at Brownsville, The University of Texas Pan American, and the Regional Academic Health Center (RAHC) campus in Harlingen. This new university would include the school of medicine once it is developed.

Including the school of medicine in this new university is expected to lower the school's cost and thus expedite its development. It is the System's intention that this new university will have the ability to access Permanent University Fund (PUF) monies for the construction of facilities. PUF is a public endowment that provides financial support to institutions in the University of Texas and Texas A&M Systems.

"I want to sincerely thank Chancellor Cigarroa, his staff, UT Board of Regents Chairman Gene Powell, and the Board for all their hard work. Today represents the culmination of more than a decade of work on quality higher education in South Texas," Senator Lucio said. "This infusion of funds for the future school of medicine not only proves UT System's continued commitment to the people of South Texas, but also paves the way for better access to crucial health care services."

The System's creation of a regional university spanning the lower Rio Grande Valley compliments that community's shared vision for spurring economic growth and increasing health care access. That vision began with the Regional Academic Health Center (RAHC), the Valley campus of the University of Texas Health Science Center of San Antonio. The RAHC was established by the 75th Legislature to serve Cameron, Hidalgo, Starr, and Willacy Counties through medical education and research programs. During the 81st Legislative Session, Senator Lucio authored and passed legislation, S.B. 98, which authorized the creation of an independent medical school in the Valley.

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