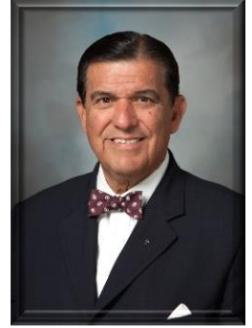




**STATE SENATOR
EDDIE LUCIO, JR.
DISTRICT 27**



Austin Capitol Office
P.O. Box 12068
Austin, TX 78711
512-463-0127

Cameron District Office
800 N. Interstate 69E, Ste. 7
Brownsville, TX 78521
956-548-0227

Hidalgo District Office
1210 W Interstate 2, Ste. 10
Pharr, Texas 78577
956-787-5227

Senator Lucio Requests Texas Governor to Provide Increased Resources and Medical Staff to Valley Hospitals
Local hospitals at critical capacity and struggle to take care of patients due to alarming surge of COVID-19 patients

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Saturday, July 4, 2020

Contact: Daniel Esparza, Legislative Director
(512) 463-0127

AUSTIN, TX – Today, Senator Eddie Lucio, Jr. (D-Brownsville) issued the following statement regarding local Rio Grande Valley hospitals reaching critical capacity due to the alarming rise of COVID-19 patients and the need of greater resources from Texas. **Senator Lucio statement:**

"Our hospitals in the Rio Grande Valley are at critical capacity and are struggling to take care of patients. I strongly urge Governor Abbott to take immediate steps to provide Valley hospitals additional resources and medical personnel to address the severe strain that the alarming surge of COVID-19 patients has caused to our local health care system.

For weeks, we have been requesting Texas to strengthen its response and to help our medically underserved region. As I discussed on July 1 with the CEOs of our Valley Hospitals, the time for Texas to act is now! With the best interest of my constituents, I reiterate my call to Governor Abbott to provide greater resources to the Rio Grande Valley.

The devastating coronavirus outbreak has resulted in more than a 500 percent increase in hospitalizations in our local hospitals and has caused the demand for intensive care units to exceed the available supply, which is why the Valley desperately needs priority assistance from Texas. Be it from the state's allocation of Federal CARES Act funding, unexpended General Revenue, or Rainy Day Fund monies, our Valley Hospitals need Governor Abbott to send them critical funds to address their lack of resources and capacity.

Regrettably, we do not have the tax base or resources to address the soaring COVID-19 outbreak and we cannot finance locally the creation of isolated environments to expand our capacity or to retrofit, renovate, or build facilities to keep up with the surging coronavirus.

The rising tide of COVID-19 patients has strained our public health system so much that we are in need of greater health care personnel. That is why I call on the Governor to make increased levels of medical professionals (doctors, nurses, and support health staff), be it from Texas National Guard forces or from regions of the state, available to our Valley hospitals, which are in dire need of their help. Along with greater amounts of medical supplies and personal protective equipment, I urge Governor Abbott to send additional resources from the state's strategic reserve supply and inventory to our Valley hospitals.

Governor Abbott, we need your help, and, respectfully, the time to act is now.

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Senator Eddie Lucio, Jr. (D – Brownsville) represents Cameron, Hidalgo, Kenedy, Kleberg, and Willacy Counties. He is the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Intergovernmental Relations; Vice Chairman of the Senate Committee on Education; Member of the Senate Committees on State Affairs; Veteran Affairs & Border Security; and of the Select Committees on Redistricting; and, Texas Ports. He is member of the Sunset Advisory Commission and has been an ex-officio member of the DSHS Task Force of Border Public Health Officials since 2017. Elected in 1991, Lucio is third in seniority in the Texas Senate.