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SouthEast Texas Regional Advisory Council (Trauma Service Area Q)

Austin, Colorado, Fort Bend, Harris, Matagorda, Montgomery, Walker, Waller, and Wharton Counties

January 20, 2026

Esmacil Porsa, MD
President and CEO, Harris Health
4800 Fournace Place
Bellaire, Texas 77401

Dear Dr. Porsa,

The Southeast Texas Regional Advisory Council (SETRAC) is proud to support the expansion plans by Harris Health to add a 100-bed facility to Ben Taub Hospital to increase patient capacity for the current and future needs of residents of Harris County and Southeast Texas.

As a registered nurse who spent 14 years working in the Level I trauma center at Ben Taub Hospital, I witnessed first-hand the extraordinary care and compassion of my medical and nursing colleagues on a daily basis. This care and emergency response truly saved lives. But even then, I saw how the community's demand for medical care far outpaced the capacity available at Ben Taub Hospital.

Our mission at SETRAC is to develop and sustain a powerful coalition of providers, responders and other healthcare related partners united together to save lives and improve health outcomes through research, education and collaboration. Harris Health truly exemplifies our mission.

Harris Health continues to do incredible work under immense pressure and demand from an ever-growing population. For a regional perspective, the medical services provided by Harris Health and the teams at Ben Taub Hospital are essential to stabilizing our community's medical infrastructure. The proposed expansion is not just a building, it's a means to strengthen our trauma and emergency system, improve health equity and provide a secure safety-net that ensures timely and high-quality care for every resident in our region.

SETRAC therefore urges the community to support and advance the expansion plans for Ben Taub Hospital by Harris Health. Our patients, healthcare workers and our entire region depend on it.

Sincerely,

Lori Upton
CEO
Southeast Texas Regional Advisory Council

