



TEACHING
HOSPITALS
of TEXAS

COMMUNITY CARE. STATEWIDE IMPACT.

Midland Health: Partner and Resource for More Than 40 Rural Hospitals

The 14 public and teaching hospitals and health systems that comprise the membership of the Teaching Hospitals of Texas account for just 4 percent of all Texas hospitals. But their reach and impact are statewide through direct patient care, healthcare workforce training and education, trauma preparedness and response, and research and clinical trials. Often, but not always, located in a major urban center, they are a vital partner for the rural hospitals around them and instrumental to a strong healthcare system statewide.

This series profiles the many ways that Texas' teaching and public hospitals support rural health infrastructure and access to care in the state's many rural communities.



Midland Health

"Expanding the capabilities of rural hospitals is better for everyone. Rural communities thrive when the rural healthcare infrastructure is strong. And, we need strong, local rural hospitals so people can live well in Rankin, Pecos, Kermit, and other rural communities across the state."

Stephen Bowerman
CEO, Midland Health

Midland Health, in the heart of the Permian Basin, a region of 21 mostly rural counties, is the public hospital district for Midland County. Since 1950, it has served residents of Midland and the surrounding areas with a wide range of services, including oncology, neurosurgery, home health services, and cardiac care at its Heart & Vascular Institute. It is also a founding partner, with Medical Center Health System in Ector County, of the Permian Basin Behavioral Health Center, a 200-bed behavioral health hospital, which opened in May 2026. A Level III designated trauma center and Level II accredited geriatric emergency department, Midland Health has grown with the region and today serves as a comprehensive medical center and partner and resource for more than 40 West Texas rural hospitals.

Rural hospitals rely on Midland Health for higher level trauma care and when they do not have an available bed, staff, or needed equipment for a particular patient.

In 2025, 48 hospitals and other healthcare facilities, such as freestanding ERs, requested to transfer more than 3,000 of their patients to Midland Health, an increase of 5 percent from 2024.

While serving as a transfer resource for patients needing a type of care not available in their home hospital, Midland Health also invests in bolstering the capacity and capabilities of rural hospitals in its region so they can care for more of their local patients at those regional hospitals and reduce the number of outbound transfers.

Bowerman explains that close-to-home healthcare is better for patients and for families as well as for hospitals. Outcomes are better when families are able to be involved in a patient's care, and reducing travel burden is instrumental to that involvement. Midland Health, too, benefits when its rural neighbors can care for more of their patients without transferring them because the downstream effect of a rural hospital transfer limits capacity at Midland Health. When regional relationships support the ability to provide needed care closer to home, everyone benefits.

To support its rural hospital neighbors, Midland Health opens up its professional development opportunities and continuing education to rural hospital staff. And, beginning in May 2026, Midland Health's new simulation center is open to rural hospital staff to provide hands-on experience with real-life care settings, such as ER, ICU, trauma, and labor & delivery. Midland Health also offers equipment that it is replacing, such as stretchers, hospital beds, and wheelchairs, to its rural neighbors so they can allocate resources elsewhere and have the physical infrastructure needed to care for more patients close to home.

Through its Regional Advisory Council (RAC), known as the "J" RAC, Midland Health also coordinates with other hospitals in the region on ongoing trauma education and performance improvement. As one of the state's 22 RACs, the J RAC develops and implements the trauma system for a 17-county region of West Texas.

MIDLAND HEALTH: PARTNER AND RESOURCE FOR MORE THAN 40 RURAL HOSPITALS



Permian Basin Behavioral Health Center

To address the region's pressing and increasing behavioral health care needs, Midland Health partnered with Medical Center Health System in neighboring Ector County to build and co-manage the Permian Basin Behavioral Health Center (PBBHC), a 225,000-square foot, state-of-the-art, 200-bed behavioral health hospital made possible with support from the Texas Legislature. PBBHC opened in May 2026.

PBBHC offers behavioral health care for children ages six and up through adult and geriatric behavioral health care. The hospital's services encompass both inpatient and outpatient behavioral health care, spanning the full continuum of mental health diagnostic and treatment capabilities.

The goal is for the hospital to serve as the behavioral health hub for the entire region, accepting transfers of patients in need of complex or acute psychiatric care from rural hospitals in surrounding communities. PBBHC staff are developing transfer protocols to ensure a streamlined process from a rural facility to PBBHC.

"PBBHC will be a terrific resource for the rural hospitals in our region," said Bowerman. "Just like all hospitals, they've got patients experiencing behavioral health crises in their EDs, and many of those patients are waiting hours or even days for transfer to appropriate mental health treatment. With PBBHC, these patients can have a warm hand-off to an appropriate level of care, freeing up ED capacity in the rural hospital and getting the patient to the right care setting for timely treatment."

The Beacon

PBBHC is part of The Beacon, a master-planned development at the geographic and economic center of the Permian Basin between Midland and Odessa. The development spans hundreds of acres and will grow in phases, bringing together healthcare, education, research, housing, and community amenities in a single, integrated destination.

In addition, through the Beacon Alliance, the mission of the Beacon extends beyond the physical footprint. The Alliance includes the region's hospitals, community partners, and others working together to solve challenges in rural health care delivery and build an integrated health ecosystem. Midland Health is a key member of The Beacon Alliance.

For healthcare, the goal is to meet the full spectrum of the region's medical needs, from cancer care to behavioral health, by coordinating with existing regional providers and developing additional facilities and services. It has six focus areas:

- 1 Bring essential health services, especially specialty care, closer to home for rural and underserved communities.
- 2 Build a sustainable clinical workforce by partnering with TTUHSC, UTPB, and others to train and retain local talent.
- 3 Use data-informed strategies to improve chronic disease outcomes and address equity gaps.
- 4 Deliver low-cost, life-saving, scalable health interventions to remote areas through telemedicine, survey-based data, and targeted tools.
- 5 Reduce the need for patients to leave the region for cancer treatment, pediatrics, behavioral health, and advanced diagnostics.
- 6 Develop roads, hospitals, housing, and educational facilities to enable long-term regional growth.

THOT Members Supporting Strong Rural Healthcare



From accepting transfers of critically ill patients and supporting ongoing clinical training and education to sharing resources and coordinating and collaborating to solve shared challenges, Teaching Hospitals of Texas members like Midland Health are instrumental to rural healthcare accessibility and rural hospital resilience.

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About THOT

Teaching Hospitals of Texas is the state's principal voice and advocate for hospitals and health systems that teach, train, and mentor the next generation of physicians, nurses, and other healthcare professionals. THOT members anchor the state's trauma and disaster response infrastructure, provide world-class tertiary and community-based care, and support policies and funding to ensure healthcare access for all Texans.

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