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Rural Hospitals Partner with Access Physicians to Ensure Local Critical Care Capacity for COVID-19 Patients

Access Physicians, the nation's leading physician-led telemedicine group, forms rural hospital collaborative to ensure access to specialty care during COVID-19 crisis

April 21, 2020 (Dallas, TX) – Access Physicians and seven rural hospitals in Texas today, launched a pulmonary and critical care specialty collaborative, to ensure local residents requiring an ICU-level of care during COVID-19, are able to receive care at their community hospital. Through the collaborative, rural hospitals will be able to care for the most severely ill COVID-19 patients in their local communities without having to transfer them to urban facilities.

The seven participating hospitals are:

- Coryell Health, Gatesville
- Cuero Regional Hospital, Cuero
- Dimmit Regional Hospital, Carrizo Springs
- Frio Regional Hospital, Pearsall
- Goodall-Witcher Healthcare, Clifton
- Hamilton Healthcare System, Hamilton
- Starr County Memorial Hospital, Rio Grande City

“Access Physicians has a tradition of working with forward-thinking hospitals to bring high acuity specialty and subspecialty care, to their patients through telemedicine,” said Chris Gallagher, MD, CEO, Access Physicians. “Today that tradition continues with this new rural hospital collaborative, to leverage our clinical excellence for rural Texas residents in seven different communities.”

Board-certified pulmonary and critical care specialists from Access Physicians will be available 24/7, for the participating hospitals, when they have COVID-19 patients requiring an ICU level of care, such as the need for mechanical ventilation. Access Physicians has worked with the clinical and operational teams at each hospital, to ensure on-site resources are available and capable of supporting such a high level of care.

“Knowing that COVID-19 patients can present to any healthcare facility, our partner rural hospitals had the foresight to develop and implement a solution so that access to care for their communities isn't compromised,” said Gallagher. “These rural hospitals are to be commended for their vision and collaboration.”

Hamilton Healthcare System is proud to be a part of this collaboration with Access Physicians. The initiative is championed by Dr. Randy Lee, Chief of Staff of Hamilton Healthcare System. “The medical leadership of Hamilton General Hospital anticipated a need very early on in our COVID-19 response, planning for augmenting our existing local critical care and pulmonary capabilities, due to the potential surge of the critically ill”, Lee said. “Telemedicine will allow specialists to provide consultations to assist our local physicians in the management of critically ill patients as needed. We were able to form a cooperative of rural hospitals for cost savings. I am proud of what we have accomplished in a very short time,” Lee said.

Hamilton Healthcare System has been working to proactively prepare for an event, where transferring patients to other hospitals may not be an option, due to overwhelmed bed capacity at tertiary facilities. Pursuing the best use of technology through the Access Physician agreement, leverages our ability to ensure we are positioned to deliver the highest level of care to critical patients when needed.

Access Physicians is a well-established, physician-led, telemedicine pioneer, providing on-demand consultation services to over 190 hospitals. To date, the company has provided care to more than 1.6 million high acuity patients with complex conditions and needs, such as respiratory failure requiring mechanical ventilation, septic shock, vasopressors, advanced heart failure, and cardiogenic shock.

With nearly a decade of experience, the company’s core service lines include infectious disease, pulmonary and critical care, cardiology and cardiac arrest management (“Code Blue”), neurology, and maternal fetal medicine.

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ABOUT ACCESS PHYSICIANS

Access Physicians is the leading multispecialty physician group committed to clinical excellence through telemedicine. Founded by physicians, the company is one of the largest providers of acute subspecialty telemedicine, deployed at 190 hospitals in 19 states, providing care for more than 1.6 million high-acuity patients in some of the hardest-to-serve healthcare environments. Core clinical service lines include Pulmonary & Critical Care, Acute Stroke & General Neurology, Hospitalist Medicine, Cardiology, Infectious Disease & Antibiotic Stewardship, and Maternal Fetal Medicine. Learn more at [accessphysicians.com](https://www.accessphysicians.com) or call 972/449-0540.