

# Bexar County Commissioner Tommy Calvert Celebrates Topping Out Ceremony for University Health Retama Hospital

SELMA, TX, UNITED STATES, April 16, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- On Monday, April 14, 2025, Bexar County Commissioner Tommy Calvert Jr. wrote "Finally!" and signed his name on the final steel beam for a 450-million-dollar county hospital he worked 8 years to bring to fruition. He was joined by civic leaders, health officials, contractors and community partners to celebrate the topping out and beam signing ceremony of the upcoming University Health Retama Hospital in northeast Bexar County.

This milestone marks the structural completion of the highest point of the building—an age-old tradition in the construction industry that signifies both progress and unity.

From his first year in office, Commissioner Calvert championed this project a decade in the making. The event took place at the construction site at 16300 Retama Parkway in Selma, Texas.

"Today, we don't just raise a beam—we raise the hopes of a community long overlooked," Calvert said. "This hospital began with a whisper from the community, and it's ending with a roar of progress."

## A Hospital That Began With a Voice

Commissioner Calvert credited the initial inspiration for the project to a conversation with Maria Lopez, wife of Judge Rogelio Lopez, in 2015. At the time, she pointed out that residents in the



Commissioner Calvert gives remarks in front of future site of University Health Retama Hospital

northeastern parts of Bexar County—despite paying into the public health system—lacked adequate access to University Health clinics and hospitals. This sparked a comprehensive GIS analysis led by Calvert's office, which confirmed that residents north of IH-10 were traveling 11 to 14 miles for county medical care.

"What we found was clear—if you lived north of IH-10, it was a long drive before you could reach a University Health facility," Calvert said. "I am proud to say that, as of today, that is no longer true."

In response, Calvert led the effort to purchase 42 acres for the new facility, commissioned an economic viability study, and built the case for investment. The data showed high insurance coverage and population growth in the area, further proving that the hospital would not only serve a public good but sustain itself financially.

Vision to Reality: Thanks to Leadership and Collaboration

The \$450 million University Health Retama Hospital is being constructed on a 42.5-acre site and is expected to open for the New Year in January of 2027. It will house 166 inpatient beds at launch, with a design expandable to 286 beds to accommodate the explosive growth along one of the fastest growing economic corridors in the US, the I-35 corridor. Calvert expressed confidence that the full capacity would be reached sooner rather than later.

"This facility will do more than heal bodies—it will uplift our economy, strengthen families, and create opportunity," he said. "The unprecedented growth in the I-35 corridor makes me extremely confident that we'll need those 286 beds sooner than we think."

The hospital will feature a wide range of services, including a 24/7 emergency department, labor



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A forklift carried the beam away to be installed in the building's completed frame

and delivery suites, neonatal intensive care, a pharmacy, radiology, lab services, and specialized care for both adult and pediatric patients. Over 500 to 600 healthcare professionals are expected to work at the facility once operational.

Commissioner Calvert extended gratitude to the team of design and construction partners—including Earl Swenson Architects, Marmon Mok, WSP, Pape Dawson Engineers, and Layton Construction—for their outstanding work and commitment to excellence.

“And to Layton Construction—I want to be clear—we expect to meet and exceed our SWMBE goals. Let this be a model of equity in business, not just in medicine,” Calvert emphasized, underscoring the importance of minority and women-owned business inclusion in public infrastructure projects.

#### Leadership at the Helm of Health Equity

Special recognition was given to University Health leadership, including long-time vice chairman Ira Smith, former president Jim Adams, former UHS board member Dr. Diana Burns-Banks and former CEO George Hernandez for working with Calvert on his vision. Calvert credited current CEO Ed Banos with skillfully carrying the baton forward.

The Commissioner also thanked Selma Mayor Tom Daly, the Selma City Council, and City Administrator Johnny Casias for their “lightning-fast” collaboration on the project, noting their responsiveness and professionalism made this complex development feel like flying “with an SR-71 in our corner.”

#### A Symbol of Resilience and Readiness

In his speech, Calvert also drew on the painful lessons of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We all remember the lack of staffed beds. That cannot happen again. And here, in Selma, we are making sure it won’t,” he said.

He described the beam signing ceremony as an act of collective storytelling—each signature representing a person, a memory, and a mission to build a better future.

“Today, we sign our names onto this beam—we are inscribing a piece of our shared story,” Calvert said. “A story of people coming together across sectors, professions, and politics to say, ‘Yes. Healthcare belongs here.’”

#### Healthcare Access, Tax Relief, and Smart Growth

Calvert has long maintained that good government must pair equity with fiscal responsibility.

In fact, in 2018, Calvert created the first UHS property tax cut—a \$10,000 homestead exemption for seniors aged 65 and older. On December 12, 2023, he led the Bexar County Commissioners Court to expand the exemption from 5% to 20% for all taxpayers, a move projected to save residents more than \$52.7 million in 2024 alone.

Calvert has voted for more than a dozen tax cuts since taking office, more than any elected official running for office in Bexar County.

## Looking Ahead

With construction visibly progressing and the community's excitement mounting, the University Health Retama Hospital project is quickly becoming a model for enhanced emergency preparedness. The hospital is poised to transform health outcomes across the northeastern corridor of Bexar County and change the economic trajectory of the area for the better.

Commissioner Calvert was also the brainchild behind the Southside's Texas A&M San Antonio University Hospital and marks a legacy for the dean of the Commissioners Court of having accomplished over 1 billion dollars in new healthcare investments in Bexar County over the last five years.

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