

THA Opposes SB 93 by Sen. Rodney Ellis

Relating to the repeal of the driver responsibility program.

- Repealing the DRP as proposed in SB 93 would destabilize the Texas trauma care system and create gaps in the availability of trauma care services.
- 117,122 trauma incidents occur each year in Texas as the result of incidents including motor vehicle crashes, falls and assaults. There are 284 designated trauma facilities statewide to provide life-saving care to Texans.
- The Texas trauma system is effective. The trauma mortality rate is 2.79 percent, a full percentage lower than the national average.
- The Driver Responsibility Program, created by the Legislature in 2003, is the only dedicated source of funding to help hospitals deliver trauma care to all Texans. It holds reckless drivers responsible for their actions by imposing surcharges for driving without a license or auto insurance, for driving while intoxicated and for having repeat infractions.
- Texas hospitals provide more than \$230 million of uncompensated trauma care annually and without the Driver Responsibility Program, this amount would be greater. In 2012, the DRP contributed \$84 million to the trauma fund.
- Since its inception, the DRP has supported the expansion of the trauma care network to include 77 new designated trauma facilities – particularly important as the state’s population grows rapidly and to serve rural areas of the state.
- THA acknowledges that the Driver Responsibility Program isn’t perfect however 49% of the revenue collected through the DRP is allocated to the Trauma Account 5111 and these funds are distributed to hospitals that provide unpaid trauma care services. Senate Bill 93 repeals the DRP, erasing the current funding mechanism for the Texas trauma system and
- Improvements have been made to the program over time. An **Indigency Program** exists for Texans whose income is 125% of the federal poverty level (\$23,050 for a family of four) or less. They have an opportunity to pay 10 percent of what they owe, but no more than \$250, and their license suspensions will be rescinded for six months upon approval; if payment is not received with six months, the suspension is reinstated. An **Incentive Program** exists for individuals living above 125% but below 300% federal poverty level. Surcharge fees in the Program are reduced by 50% of the total amount assessed and their license suspensions will be rescinded or reinstated in a similar fashion to the Indigency Program.