



October 17, 2023

Dear Mayor Guajardo and Members of the City Council,

I am writing to you about the recent decision to phase out the Emergency Medicine Residency Program at CHRISTUS Health System by June 2026. There has been a lot of speculation, questions and misinformation about the decision to end the program, which is a partnership with Texas A&M University Health.

I want to assure you, the residents and faculty, our Associates and our community that the decision to phase out the program was made with thorough consideration of our community's needs and our ministry's available resources to serve those needs. We ultimately determined that our ability to sustain this program would end with graduating this cohort in 2026.

To ensure the quality of care our patients receive will not change, we are committed to seeing that our emergency department staffing and other health care services remain strong as we wind down the teaching program. Our Family Medicine Residency, as well as our Family Medicine Obstetrics and Geriatrics fellowship programs, will continue unchanged. We have also invested in a Nurse Residency Program to support new graduate registered nurses as they develop skills to practice independently in high complexity care area.

We are also committed to the residents currently enrolled in Emergency Medicine Residency Program. That is precisely why, as we have communicated to them, the program's date of closure isn't until June 2026. For any impacted Associates, we will do all that we can to provide support, including, but not limited to, assisting them in finding other open roles within CHRISTUS Health.

I want to stress that as we end this program, it will not impact patient care, at all. Our emergency department will remain intact at all CHRISTUS Spohn Hospitals, both in Corpus Christi, and in our rural hospitals in Kleberg, Alice, and Beeville.

This Emergency Medical program has been around since 2007. When it was created, we were only one of three Emergency Medicine Residency Programs in the state. Now, there are 18. The program has been staffed far above the CHRISTUS Graduate Medical Education (GME) cap, and it has been privately funded by CHRISTUS Health for many years as a result. We are proud of the more than 120 graduates we have supported and of the current residents we were supporting today.

The American College of Emergency Physicians sponsored a workforce study in December 2021 that found that there will be a surplus of emergency physicians by 2030. Furthermore, in 2023, 555 emergency medicine slots across the United States went unfilled. That number is up from 2022, when 219 were unfilled in the match. Simply put, there is a national oversupply of emergency residency slots.

Again, this was not an easy decision. Ultimately, we are simply unable to sustain the program for the long-term future. A majority of this program has been privately funded by CHRISTUS Health for many years.

As a nonprofit health system, CHRISTUS Spohn remains dedicated to the quality and affordable health care we serve to the Coastal Bend. We will continue to focus on making integrated and consumer-focused care more accessible, reliable, and personal for all of the people we are blessed to serve, as we extend the healing ministry of Jesus Christ.

Sincerely,



Dom Dominguez
CEO, CHRISTUS Spohn Health System