

## **UMC CELEBRATES 107 YEARS OF HEALTHCARE IN BORDERPLEX**

**EL PASO, Texas** University Medical Center (UMC) of El Paso is honored to recognize its 107<sup>th</sup> year of healthcare for El Paso County and the Borderplex region. Today, Jan. 26, UMC celebrates its history and the progress the hospital has made through the millions of healed patients, the hundreds of thousands of newborns, and the betterment of health for the community.

When it first opened its doors in 1915, it was known as El Paso County General Hospital. In 1959, the El Paso County Hospital District was created and approved by local voters, which paved the way for a new hospital building. The hospital was to be named R.E. Thomason General Hospital, in honor of Robert Ewing Thomason, a former mayor of El Paso and a United States District Judge of the United States District Court for the Western District of Texas.

“As I throw this first spade of dirt,” R.E. Thomason said at the 1961 groundbreaking ceremony, “it is my hope and prayer that the fine, modern hospital to be erected on this site will stand for many years to care for the sick and suffering in El Paso and the Southwest.”

In 1963, the 335-bed R.E. Thomason General Hospital, built by Robert E. McKee General Contractor, opened to the public. Ten years later, in 1973, the hospital was designated as the primary teaching hospital of the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC) and in 1975, the hospital received accreditation by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospitals (JCAHO). A \$35 million dollar renovation and expansion project followed and improved its emergency department and pediatric intensive care unit. El Paso’s first heliport was added in 1986. The hospital was rebranded as University Medical Center of El Paso in 2009.

In honor of 107 years of service, banners citing UMC’s historic journey will hang at the main campus, located at 4815 Alameda Avenue, and at clinics throughout El Paso.

UMC is pleased to share a timeline of key dates in its ambitious organizational history.

**1915:** El Paso County General Hospital opens with only 100 beds.

**1935:** The hospital expands to 204 beds, equipped with an operating room and sterilization equipment.

**1941:** An 88-bed tuberculosis ward is built on the hospital grounds.

**1959:** Local voters approve El Paso County General Hospital District.

**1963:** The new 335-bed R.E. Thomason General Hospital opens.

**1965:** At the dedication of R.E. Thomason General Hospital, Judge Thomason declares that it is “the greatest honor ever to come to me.”

**1973:** R.E. Thomason General Hospital becomes the primary teaching hospital of the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center.

**1975:** R.E. Thomason General Hospital achieves accreditation by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospitals (JCAHO).

**1983:** The hospital undergoes a \$35 million dollar renovation and expansion project to improve its emergency department and pediatric intensive care unit.

**1986:** The hospital becomes a Level I Trauma Center. El Paso’s first hospital heliport is added.

**1996 & 1998:** R.E. Thomason General Hospital named as one of America’s Top 100 hospitals.

**2002:** R.E. Thomason General Hospital adopts the C.A.R.E. values of Community, Accountability, Respect and Excellence. These values continue to serve as a standard of care throughout the organization.

**2009:** R.E. Thomason General Hospital officially changes its name to University Medical Center (UMC) of El Paso.

**2011:** UMC completes a \$154 million dollar expansion and remodel of its Emergency Department featuring specialized units for neurology and cardiology. In addition, UMC is awarded the Presidents’ Award by the National Association of Public Hospitals (NAPH), the highest honor NAPH bestows on its member hospitals.

**2017:** The Joint Commission, the nation’s highest standard for medical accreditation, designates UMC as a Comprehensive Stroke Center. Also, the State of Texas designates UMC as a Level 1 Stroke Center, a first for El Paso. Also, a new era of healthcare begins for UMC with the opening of two large Outpatient Clinics in west and east El Paso, each approximately 45,000 square feet.

**2018:** UMC becomes the first Level 4 Maternal Care hospital in El Paso, designated by the Texas Department of State Health Services. This is the highest designation possible for maternal care.

**2019:** UMC is one of two hospitals in El Paso to care for victims of the August 3, 2019, Walmart shooting that killed 23 people. UMC’s expertise in trauma care ensures all of the patients at the hospital received the highest level of treatment.

**2020 – 2021:** In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, UMC becomes the foremost hospital to provide vaccinations for the El Paso community. This is the largest public

health crisis since the 1918 Influenza Pandemic, when the hospital was just a few years old.

**2021:** UMC unveils the Mobile Stroke Unit (MSU), a specialized vehicle designed to provide rapid response to stroke victims throughout El Paso. It is the most advanced unit of its kind in the world. This same year, the UMC Mobile Health Clinic makes receiving the COVID-19 vaccine easier in El Paso County. The mobile clinic allows vaccines safe transport to pop-up vaccination sites for eligible and pre-registered residents to receive their COVID-19 vaccine without making a trip to the city. Also in 2021, UMC Surgical Center West opens as a 24,000-square-foot facility offering top level endoscopic and neurosurgery care. In addition, UMC opens two state-of-the-art emergency departments in east and northeast El Paso, affording tens of thousands of people easy access to around-the-clock emergency services 365 days a year. Both UMC Emergency Departments offer pharmacy services and full access to UMC's Scherr Legate Level 1 Trauma Center.

**2022:** UMC continues to work tirelessly to save lives during the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic. To date, UMC, along with partners at its vaccination sites at the El Paso County Coliseum, UMC Clinics, and the UMC Mobile Health Clinic, has vaccinated over 310,000 people. The hospital is proud to be a part of the combined effort by the City of El Paso, other local hospitals and healthcare organizations, private physicians, and pharmacies, in making the Borderplex one of the most highly vaccinated regions in the State of Texas.

(You can also watch a short video of some of our [many milestones here](#).)