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For Immediate Distribution

April 30, 2020

BUSINESSES, FOUNDATIONS AND HEALTH OFFICIALS STEP UP TO SUPPORT COVID-19 ENHANCED REGIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE

In an Effort to Combat COVID-19, Borderplex Leaders Join Forces to Fund and Support the Region's New Public-Private Initiative with Battelle

El Paso, Texas - Today the COVID-19 Enhanced Regional Public Health Response Partnership announced major funders for the initiative, building a foundation for the public-private partnership that is strengthening the region's collective capacity to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. This public-private partnership includes the City of El Paso, the Medical Center of the Americas Foundation (MCA), the Paso del Norte Health Foundation and Battelle. The initial funders include the Paso del Norte Health Foundation, the Woody and Gayle Hunt Family Foundation, Paul L. Foster, El Paso Water, El Paso Electric, Texas Gas Service, WestStar and Transtelco. To date, about 60 percent of the partnership's goal of \$500,000 in private dollars has been raised.

"The Paso del Norte Health Foundation has been committed to addressing the health priorities of our border region for 25 years," said Tracy Yellen, Chief Executive Officer of the Paso del Norte Community Foundation. "As we continue to navigate uncharted territory in the COVID-19 pandemic, the Health Foundation, along with multiple business and foundation leaders, have committed to providing the resources needed to ensure every El Pasoan has the information and access to health care they deserve. We are confident this unique partnership with Battelle will allow us to do just that."

Also announced today was a coalition who will serve as allies to the Enhanced Regional Public Health Response Partnership. This coalition, which includes local hospitals, medical research centers, public health agencies, and business leaders in El Paso, Las Cruces, and Ciudad Juárez, will utilize their insight and networks to keep our community informed on the best ways to remain healthy, access testing and treatment, and stop the spread of COVID-19; as well as inform the partnership on gaps that they see in the region as it relates to the public health needs of communities.

The coalition members include:

- BIO EIPaso-Juarez, Jackie Butler, Director
- BorderRAC, Wanda Helgesen, Executive Director
- Borderplex Alliance, Jon Barela, CEO
- Burrell College of Osteopathic Medicine, John L. Hummer, MHA, President
- Cardinal Health, Mylena Walker, Director
- City of El Paso, Dee Margo, Mayor
- City of El Paso, Department of Economic Development, Jessica Herrera, Director
- Community en Acción, Xavier Bañales
- El Paso Chamber of Commerce, David Jerome, President and CEO

- El Paso Children’s Hospital, Cindy Stout, CEO
- El Paso Community College, William Serrata, Ph.D., President
- El Paso Community Foundation, Kathrin Berg, Vice President
- El Paso County Judge Ricardo A. Samaniego
- El Paso Electric, Adrian J. Rodriguez, Interim CEO
- El Pasoans Fighting Hunger Food Bank, Susan E. Goodell, CEO
- El Paso Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Cindy Ramos-Davidson, CEO
- El Paso Water, John E. Balliew, President and CEO
- Medical Center of the Americas, Emma W. Schwartz, MPH, President
- Mesilla Valley Economic Development Alliance, Davin Lopez, President and CEO
- Paso del Norte Health Foundation, Tracy J. Yellen, CEO
- Paul L. Foster
- PHIX Health Information Exchange, Emily Hartmann, Executive Director
- Project Vida Health Center, Bill Schlesinger, CEO
- STTE Foundation, Joseph Sapien, Executive Director
- Technology-HUB, Ricardo Mora, CEO
- Texas Gas Service, Elizabeth O’Hara, Regional Manager/State Leader, Community Relations
- Transtelco, Miguel S. Fernandez, CEO
- Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso, Dr. Richard Lange, President
- United Way of El Paso County, Deborah Zuloaga, President and CEO
- University Medical Center of El Paso, Jacob Cintron, CEO
- UTEP, Dr. Heather Wilson, President
- WestStar, Rick Francis, Chairman and CEO
- William Beaumont Army Medical Center, Colonel Michael S. Oshiki, Commander
- Woody and Gayle Hunt Family Foundation
- Workforce Solutions Borderplex, Leila Melendez, CEO
- YWCA El Paso del Norte Region, Dr. Sylvia Acosta, CEO

“The strength of this coalition is seen in the diverse group of individuals that have come together for a shared mission -- to help unify our border community through a coordinated local effort to stop the spread of coronavirus, to keep those on the frontlines safe, and to be innovative in how we deploy our health resources to those who need them the most,” said Jackie Butler, BIO El Paso-Juárez. “Together we have united leaders across El Paso, Juárez and New Mexico to enhance our response to COVID-19, which will not only help us in the fight against COVID-19, but will prepare the region for any future emergency health crisis.”

This coalition of community leaders will work in tandem with the Economic Task Force, a separate coalition introduced by El Paso Mayor Dee Margo to focus on strategies to safely reopen El Paso businesses and put El Paso on a path towards economic recovery.

“On behalf of the City of El Paso, I want to thank all of the organizations and individuals who are lending their time and resources to support this first-ever COVID-19 Enhanced Regional Public Health Response Partnership,” said Mayor Margo. “With their support and recognition of prioritizing the needs of our community, we will establish a multi-phase plan and have the resources in place to fight against COVID-19, including access to the testing, decontamination technology, and medical supplies and devices.”

With Battelle's support, the initial phases of this initiative will assess our region's supply of COVID-19 testing and personal protective equipment (PPE), triage and monitor pandemic response plans, focus on hospital surge capacity planning, and increase bi-national coordination and communications. A primary focus will be placed on PPE training, which will include the type of PPE to use in different settings, how to use it properly, how to source it reliably and how to safely and effectively decontaminate it.

At major technology centers and national laboratories around the world, Battelle conducts research and development, designs and manufactures products, and delivers critical services for government and commercial customers. As a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Battelle created the first decontamination system for PPE, which cities across the country have been using to address their shortage of N95 face masks.

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Promoting **Transparent & Consistent Communication** Among All Members of the Community