



*"Quality Care Close to Home"*

800 East Highway 71  
Smithville, Texas 78957

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**SMITHVILLE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY NEWS**

January 15, 2003

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Texas State Representative Robbie Cook, from House District 28, visited Smithville Regional Hospital, Wednesday, January 8. "For many of the issues the Legislature will be addressing this session," said Cook, "Smithville Regional is the place to go for the real information. Inadequate reimbursement, malpractice insurance costs, and Medicare and Medicaid issues all impact right here."

Dennis Jack, Hospital CEO, and key Hospital staff and several Smithville Hospital Authority Board members met with Cook as he prepared to begin the 2003 Legislative Session in Austin. Cook toured the hospital, then was briefed on current growth and financial issues which affect health care services in Bastrop County.

"We have seen a tremendous increase in the number of patients unable to pay for their hospital care," said Jack. "Continued cuts in Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement hit the bottom line of every service the Smithville Hospital Authority provides, from emergency care to long term nursing home care."

Cook pointed out his concern with the gap in insurance coverage for the "working poor," those families which are not eligible for government health care support, but do not have the option of health care coverage through their employment. He indicated this issue, as well as medical insurance tort reform, as two of his priorities to address during the coming session.

Cook's district covers Bastrop, Colorado, Fayette and Wharton Counties. A resident of Eagle Lake, Texas, he has been a State Representative since 1996.

"It is really an honor to have Mr. Cook visit us," said Jack. "We hope we have been able to give him helpful information about the issues facing Smithville Regional, as well as all other small hospitals in Texas."

For additional information:  
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