



Big Spring's Scenic Mountain Medical Center continues to expand its health services to residents of West Texas.

Big Spring is big on health care – the Texas town boasts three different medical facilities.

At Scenic Mountain Medical Center, the 150-bed hospital admits 3,400 patients each year, while its emergency department annually sees 14,000 people. Over the past three years, SMMC has added nine new physicians.

In 2008, the hospital expanded its services to include lithotripsy treatment and a sleep lab. A recent upgrade to its magnetic resonance imaging equipment allows physicians to examine a patient's blood vessels in order to quickly and precisely diagnose health problems. A Level IV Trauma Center designation, first earned in 2005, certifies that the Emergency Department at Scenic Mountain provides the equipment and resources to care for patients with traumatic injuries.

"This designation was given after SMMC voluntarily underwent the intensive survey process by the Texas Department of State Health Services to demonstrate its commitment to high-quality trauma care for the residents of Howard County and the surrounding

area," says George N. Parsley, CEO of Scenic Mountain Medical Center. "We will continue to work to set new standards of excellence in providing emergency care."

SMMC has a staff of more than 300 employees and an annual payroll of \$17 million, and it is involved in several community nonprofit efforts.

"The hospital spends about \$1 million annually on capital equipment upgrades to keep abreast of the ever-changing technology available in the marketplace," Parsley says. "We are creating a great place for people to work, physicians to practice medicine and, most importantly, for patients to receive great care."

Meanwhile, two other hospitals in town are just as dedicated to providing quality care to patients.

Big Spring State Hospital, which is known for its innovative methods in treating mental illness, is a 200-bed psychiatric facility that serves 58 counties in West Texas and the Texas Panhandle. It was founded in 1938 and is the largest employer in Howard County with a staff of 600, including

doctors, nurses and social workers.

And the West Texas Veterans Administration Health Care System, commonly referred to as the VA hospital, welcomes approximately 19,000 patients each year to its 25-bed facility in Big Spring. The hospital only treats veterans, and its service area spans 47 counties in West Texas and Lea County, N.M.

"Our main campus is Big Spring, but we also have veterans' outpatient clinics in Abilene, San Angelo, Odessa, Fort Stockton, Stamford and Hobbs, N.M.," says Iva Jo Hanslik, community relations coordinator for the West Texas Veterans Administration Health Care System. "The area we serve is actually larger than 33 of the U.S. states."

Besides extensive outpatient ambulatory care, the VA hospital also performs several hundred eye surgeries each year at its Big Spring site.

"Our ophthalmology department actually provides the training for all the ophthalmology residents at Texas Tech University," Hanslik says. "We do a lot here at this hospital so that our veterans receive the absolute best care we can provide them."