



Through the Opportunity Austin strategy, the Austin Chamber leads efforts to grow and diversify metro Austin's economy. The Chamber takes a long-term outlook and advocates for projects and policies that will enhance our overall competitiveness for new and existing businesses. From the beginning, a top priority for Opportunity Austin has been the funding, development and construction of a medical school and research campus at the University of Texas at Austin. Previously, metro Austin was one of the largest regions without a four-year graduate medical program. Opportunity Austin commissioned a study by the renowned economist Ray Perryman "The Impact of Developing a Major Medical School at the University of Texas-Austin on Regional and State Business Activity" and presented the findings in 2008.

Under the leadership of Senator Kirk Watson and the Central Health Board of Managers (which included 2012 Austin Chamber Board Chair Clarke Heidrick), Proposition 1 was placed on the November 2012 ballot to allow for expansion of healthcare infrastructure and services. Opportunity Austin provided significant financial and volunteer leadership to support the campaign in favor of the proposition. On November 6, 2012 Travis County voters approved Proposition 1. This voter authorization allowed the University of Texas, Central Health, and Seton to proceed with construction of the new research-focused medical school and affiliated teaching hospital. This further allowed the development of a transformational and value-based health care service delivery model to support the needs and improve the health outcomes for Travis County residents.

With generous financial support from the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation and many others, the Dell Medical School welcomed its first class of students in Fall 2016. Consistent with the original vision of Opportunity Austin, recent economic success stories such as athenahealth and Merck have enhanced and strengthened the Austin regional economy. Through collaborative partnerships and supporting infrastructure, the Dell Medical School serves as a nexus for innovation and emerging technology.