

Medical Emergency: Act Now!



TMA President C. Bruce Malone, MD, told the Texas Health and Human Services Commission the new guidelines “penalize the physicians who care for the sickest and frailest Medicare patients.

They hit particularly hard practices in rural, inner-city, and border Texas, as those practices serve a disproportionate number of dually eligible Medicare patients. In addition to compromising the financial viability of these practices, we fear that the rules could result in fewer physicians willing to set up a practice in the communities that most need them.”



A combination of poorly informed government decisions created a medical emergency for thousands of dual-eligible Texans and the physicians who care for them. “Dual-eligible” patients qualify for Medicare because of their age or disability. They also qualify for Medicaid assistance because of their income. Steep budget cuts now threaten their care — and may force some doctors to close their doors.

Background: Until January of this year, the federal government (Medicare) paid 80 percent of a “dual-eligible” patient’s visit to a doctor. The other 20 percent of the cost was paid by Texas Medicaid. The state Medicaid program also paid the Medicare deductible for these patients. This year the Medicare deductible is \$140.

Under the new guidelines, which went into effect Jan. 1, 2012, Texas Medicaid no longer pays the physician the patient’s 20-percent coinsurance. Nor does Medicaid pay the full \$140 annual deductible if Medicare’s payment for a service exceeds Medicaid’s allowable. Because Medicaid physician fees are so low, this is almost always the case. And to make matters worse, both Medicare and Medicaid had computer glitches in their payment systems. As a result, some physicians have not received one cent since January for the care they provide to these vulnerable patients.

Who it affects: More than 320,000 dual-eligible patients and the doctors who care for them.

Action needed: Texas physicians and their patients call on state leaders to take emergency action to help dual-eligible patients. The state Legislative Budget Board is the only entity that can mitigate or halt cuts when the legislature is not in session.

Please add your name to the Medical Emergency Petition today (see petition on back). Share it with your colleagues, friends, and family.



Physicians Caring for Texans

Preserve access to care for Texas’ most vulnerable patients.

Preserve Access to Quality Health Care!

Please print your name and address.

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This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Please fax signed petition to TMA at (512) 370-1693.

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