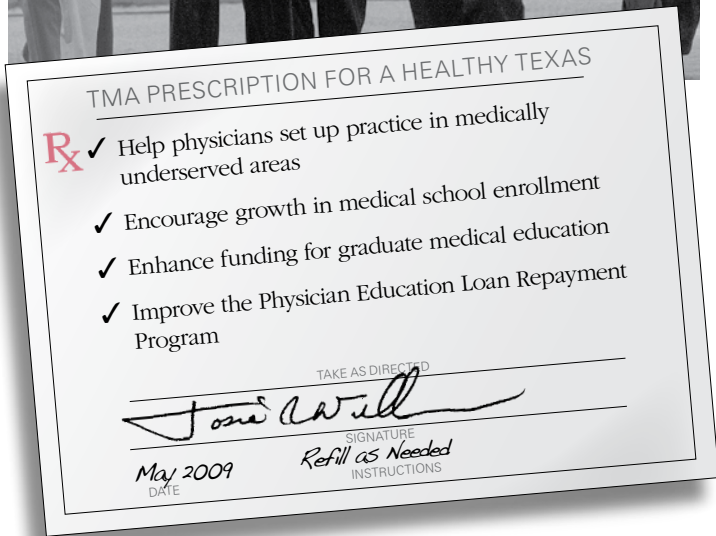


Improve Access to Health Care



Texas has a shortage of physicians. Given the size and expanse of our state, along with the fact that we are leading the nation in growth, many rural and even urban communities need more physicians. To produce the physicians we need, the state must adequately fund medical and graduate medical education (GME), preceptorships, and physician education loan repayment programs.



Physicians Caring for Texans

PATIENT AND PHYSICIAN PLATFORM

TMA Strongly Supports:

- The provision in the House version of **SB 1** — the state budget bill — that would increase GME formula funding by \$16 million for the 2010-11 biennium.
- **HB 2687** by Rep. Mark Shelton (R-Fort Worth), which would create more residency slots for students in rural and underserved regions of the state.
- **SB 2243** by Sen. Judith Zaffirini (D-Laredo), which offers up to \$140,000 over four years to eligible physicians to repay educational loans. It also brings together the current physician education loan repayment program and the brand-new Medicaid loan repayment program to recruit more physicians for both underserved and Medicaid populations.

Medicine's Messages

- Texas needs more GME slots to train the number of physicians required to care for our rapidly growing population and stop our overdependence on other states and countries.
- The lack of adequate GME funding jeopardizes Texas' economic future.
- The shortage of GME slots virtually guarantees some medical students will be forced to leave the state upon graduation. Those leaving likely will not return to Texas. They will take with them more than \$200,000 of state investment in their medical school education.
- It is not good fiscal policy to make a state commitment of \$200,000 for each Texas medical student over four years, and then force graduates to leave the state for GME. Those new physicians very likely will never return to Texas.
- The average debt of a new physician is approximately \$131,000. The amount of medical school debt affects where a new physician chooses to practice and which specialty he or she selects. The state's Physician Education Loan Repayment Program currently pays only \$45,000 — about a third of the average debt a physician accumulates during a minimum of seven years spent in medical school and GME.
- Rural and border communities have a better chance of recruiting a new physician when they can offer a unique benefit such as loan repayment.