



Physicians Caring for Texans

## **POLICY STATEMENT ON EXPANDED COVERAGE**

*On Feb. 1, 2013, with input from the Council on Legislation, Council on Socioeconomics, and Ad Hoc Committee on Medicaid, CHIP, and the Uninsured, the TMA Board of Trustees adopted the following policy statement:*

It is the vision of the Texas Medical Association to improve the health of all Texans. Too many Texans, too many of our patients, cannot afford the health care they need. This hurts their health, the economic growth and prosperity of our state, and taxpayers all across Texas.

We currently have a tremendously cost-effective opportunity to improve access to health care for these Texans. Unfortunately, that federal offer comes in the form of expanding our Medicaid program to cover the working poor.

Medicaid provides essential health services for millions of Texans. But many parts of the current Texas Medicaid system are broken. It offers the promise of coverage without adequate funding to ensure access to care. It is fraught with exasperating, unyielding red tape. Its overzealous “fraud inspectors” are getting in the way of our taking care of patients. We should not accept the option of simply expanding that broken program.

On the other hand, we cannot reject the federal government’s offer to help us care for the working poor of Texas. We need to take this money and use it for our people, our patients.

We must look beyond the federal government’s expansion solution to design a solution that is for Texas and for Texans. The people of this state are ingenious and innovative problem solvers. We are confident that state leaders and lawmakers – with input from physicians, employers, taxpayers, and others – can design a comprehensive solution that:

1. Draws down all available federal dollars to expand access to health care for poor Texans;
2. Gives Texas the flexibility to change the plan as our needs and circumstances change;
3. Clears away Medicaid’s financial, administrative, and regulatory hurdles that are driving up costs and driving Texas physicians away from the program; and
4. Relieves local Texas taxpayers and Texans with insurance from the unfair and unnecessary burden of paying the entire cost of caring for their uninsured neighbors.