

# Our 2017 Prescription to Keep Texas Healthy



**TMA represents more than 50,000 doctors and medical school students** who are caring for our state's 27 million citizens. We proudly stand for all Texas physicians and our patients.

**Yes, we make State Senate and State House calls.** In each of your legislative communities we have physician members standing by to give first-hand accounts of the good and bad on all proposed health care legislation. For answers and advice, turn to TMA. Please call us, and we will have your local doctors visit with you on any issue before the legislature.

**"Physicians Caring for Texans"** is our straightforward motto. Our legislative agenda is straightforward too. We advocate protecting the personal health of all Texans and the fiscal health of our state.



Physicians Caring for Texans

## **Rx** The Texas Medical Association's Healthy Goals Prescribed for the 85th Texas Legislature

*(Updated May 2017)*

### **Stop Health Insurance Tactics That Cause Surprise Medical Bills**

- Expand the current mediation process, while maintaining the \$500 threshold, to all physicians and providers providing out-of-network services at certain in-network facilities, and to certain out-of-network scenarios where patients are receiving surprise bills for emergency care. Support **SB 507** and **HB 1566**.
- Require health plans to maintain accurate directories of their network providers. Support **HB 2760** and **SB 2210**.
- Allow physicians to override health plans' use of "step therapy" to substitute prescribed drugs for chronically ill patients. Support **SB 680** and **HB 1464**.
- Require health plans to prorate copays when less than 30-day supply is ordered. Support **SB 697** and **HB 1296**.

### **Invest Wisely In Mental Health, Public Health, and Public Safety Programs**

- Ensure parents' right to know about vaccination exemption rates at their children's schools. Support **HB 2249** and **SB 1010**.
- Improve access to quality mental health care services. Support **HB 10** and **SB 860**.
- Increase minimum age to buy tobacco products to 21. Support **SB 910** and **HB 1908**.
- Ban texting while driving. Support **HB 62** and **SB 31**.

### **Require Medical School Training and Licensure for All Who Practice Medicine**

- Medical diagnosis and prescriptive authority must remain the purview of medical-school-trained, licensed physicians. Oppose **HB 1415** and **SB 681**, **HB 593** and **SB 1240**, and **SB 728** and **HB 2118**.

*(continued)*



## Oppose Outside Interference in Physicians' Practices

- Prohibit sole use of maintenance of certification (MOC) status for licensing, payment, contracting, or privileges. Support **SB 1148** and **HB 3216**.
- Do not keep physician-specific cost comparisons from physicians in a physician-led Accountable Care Organization (ACO). Support **HB 3124**.
- Authorize TMB oversight and regulation of nonprofit health corporations. Support **SB 833** and **HB 752**.

## Require Same Standard of Medical Care Whether In-Person or By Telemedicine

- Physicians providing care to Texans must be licensed in Texas.
- Ensure that physicians have access to the patient's relevant clinical information in order to make a diagnosis and conform to the standard of care.
- A medically necessary, covered service should be paid for regardless of how it is provided.
- Support **SB 1107** and **HB 2697**.

## Keep Our Texas-Trained Doctors in Texas

- Ensure we have 1.1 Texas residency slots for every one Texas medical school graduate.

## Use Technology — Not Mandates — To Address “Doctor Shopping” and Opioid Diversion

- Require automatic prescriber registration in Texas' Prescription Drug Monitoring Program.
- Authorize the Board of Pharmacy to “push out” electronic notifications to prescribers and pharmacies when data suggests “doctor shopping.”
- Add wholesaler delivery data to the Drug Monitoring Program database in order to match dispensing and delivery data by geographic area.
- Support **SB 316**.

## Renew Texas Medical Board

- Enact due process protections for physicians
- Support **HB 3040**.

## Protect Our State's Medical Liability Tort Reform Caps

- Since statewide voter approval of noneconomic medical liability damage caps in 2003, Texas has gained 21,000 new physicians. Protecting these caps will help our state continue to improve upon our national ranking of 41st in active patient care physicians per 100,000 population. Oppose **HB 719**.

## Protect Coverage and Access to Health Services for Our Most Vulnerable Populations

- Take advantage of opportunities to switch from federal to Texas-run health care solution for our low-income families, seniors, and Texans with disabilities
- Set physicians' Medicaid payment rates at least equal to Medicare.
- Ensure no reduction in benefits, eligibility criteria, or access to care.
- Modernize the Medicaid Vendor Drug Program.
- Improve Medicaid prior authorization requirements to cut red tape.



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