

TMA Policy: Federal Medicaid Reform and Implications for Texas (2017)

1. That the Texas Medical Association vigorously advocate to preserve guaranteed, uncapped federal Medicaid funding for at least all Texas Medicaid populations covered by the program as of Jan. 1, 2017.
2. That TMA strongly advocate maintaining mandated minimum services, benefits and cost-sharing requirements for pregnant women and children, including protecting the Early Periodic Screening Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) program to ensure Medicaid-enrolled children retain access to all medically necessary services, and maternal health services to promote healthy pregnancies and birth outcomes.
3. That TMA strongly reiterate its support for measures that promote continuity of care and the patient-centered medical home, including maintaining 12-month continuous coverage for children enrolled in the Children's Health Insurance Program and advocating for the same policy for children's Medicaid, and preserve measures to simplify and streamline Medicaid and CHIP enrollment processes so that children and other enrollees do not lose coverage due to red-tape and bureaucracy.
4. That TMA reiterate its commitment to implementing a comprehensive initiative to expand health care coverage to low-income Texans using federal funding and private sector solutions.
5. That TMA evaluate the feasibility of piloting a capped Medicaid funding scheme for Medicaid expansion population should Texas implement a coverage option for low-income Texans, so long as the initiative provides patients meaningful coverage as devised by an advisory panel of primary and specialty care physicians and does not increase uncompensated care for physicians.
6. That TMA advocate strongly to stand against any federal or state reform measure, including block grants, that will diminish patient access to services or increase physicians' uncompensated care.
7. That TMA collaborate with state legislative leadership to seek relief from federal administrative requirements that impose undue costs and paperwork on patients, physicians, and the state without improving patient care or outcomes.

TMA Policy: Medicaid Coverage and Reform (2013)

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 before reforming 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 taking care of patients. Physicians 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. Physicians 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 remedy that works 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 employers, physicians, taxpayers, and others can design a comprehensive solution that:

- Draws down all available federal dollars to expand access to health care for poor Texans;
- Gives Texas the flexibility to change the plan as our needs and circumstances change;
- Clears away Medicaid's financial, administrative, and regulatory hurdles that are driving up costs and driving Texas physicians away from the program;
- 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;
- Provides Medicaid payments directly to physicians for patient care equal to at least those of Medicare payments; and
- Continues to uphold and improve due process of law for physicians in the State of Texas as it relates to the Office of Inspector General.

The Texas Medical Association calls on the American Medical Association to advocate for Medicaid payments to all physicians for patient care to be at least equal to Medicare payments.