

TEXAS MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

Preserve Access to Care



March 2015

TMA's Healthy Vision 2020 Agenda

Lawmakers are taking important steps to shore up Texas' physician workforce, to improve mental health services for adults and children, and to ensure low-income women have access to preventive care. We applaud the state's budget writers working on House Bill 1 and Senate Bill 2 for recognizing the importance of growing graduate medical education, and improving Texas' mental health services and women's health programs.

- Increase physicians' Medicaid payments that reflect the cost of actually providing the service
- Improve Texas' physician workforce
- Strengthen Texas' mental health and substance abuse system
- Support preventive care for low-income women



Physicians Caring for Texans

Patient and Physician Platform

TMA Strongly Supports

- Support and develop new graduate medical education (GME) programs in the specialties that best reflect the state's health care needs. Support incentives for hospitals and other sponsoring institutions to develop residency programs in the most-needed specialties.
- Fund the development of the state's behavioral health workforce including expansion of residency slots in psychiatry.
- Increase funding for state and local mental health initiatives including support for jail diversion, and assess the needs of persons with mental illness who are being released from our state prisons.
- Fund existing mental health substance abuse service levels, while also investing new dollars towards substance abuse treatment and prevention.
- Increase funding for women's preventive health services to ensure all women in need can obtain critical services.

Medicine's Message: Improve Texas' Physician Workforce

- Texas needs continued and stable state support for both critical parts of a physician's education and training to help cultivate future generations of Texas physicians.
- Almost half (49 percent) of Texas medical school graduates left the state for residency training in 2014. Texas invests \$176,000 in each medical student's four years of education. Texas physicians are concerned about the state's ability to protect that growing investment with enough GME positions to meet demand.
- The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board recommends a ratio of 1.1 entry-level GME positions for each Texas medical school graduate.

Medicine's Message: Fund Mental Health Services

- Mental illness and substance abuse hurt the Texas economy through lost earning potential, the costs of treating coexisting conditions, disability payments, homelessness, and incarceration. More than 8 percent of Texas adults report current depression, and 5.2 percent report serious psychological distress.
- A Texan with serious mental illness is eight times more likely to be in a jail than in a hospital or treatment program, at a cost to the state of \$50,000 per year.

Medicine's Message: Fund Preventive Care for Women

- The Sunset Advisory Commission has proposed consolidating Texas' three women's health programs (Texas Women's Health Program, Expanded Primary Health Care Program, and family planning) into two to reduce complexity for patients and providers. Texas currently has the capacity to serve only about one-quarter of the women who qualify for these programs.
- SB 2 proposes to increase funding for women's health by \$50 million, which TMA strongly supports. Regardless of the program structure, Texas must increase funding for women's preventive and primary services to increase women's access to care, improve health care provider capacity, and improve birth outcomes.



Healthy Vision 2020

For more information, call TMA at (512) 370-1300.