

Our 2017 Prescription to Keep Texas Healthy



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

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.

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.

Support a Strong and Fair Texas Medical Board (TMB) and Stop Diverting Physician License Fee Revenue

- Continue and improve the TMB to ensure appropriate and safe regulation for the practice of medicine.
- Medical Board discipline procedure needs to protect patients and guarantee physicians a transparent, fair process.
- Stop diverting physician license fee revenue to the general fund. Instead, reduce the fee and use all funds collected to improve the Medical Board and speed up Texas medical licensing, which can take more than 12 months for the entire application process.

Switch From Federal to Texas-Run Health Care Solution for Our Low-Income Families, Seniors, and Texans with Disabilities

- Protect coverage and access to health services for our most vulnerable populations.
- Set physicians' Medicaid payment rates at least equal to Medicare.
- Cover Texas' 1 million-plus uninsured with private insurance that includes copays, tailored benefits, and health savings accounts.
- Modernize the Medicaid Vendor Drug Program and improve Medicaid prior authorization requirements to cut red tape.



Physicians Caring for Texans

(continued)



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.

Stop Health Insurance Tactics That Cause Surprise Medical Bills

- The Department of Insurance must enforce 2015 and 2013 laws on adequate health plan networks and accurate directories.
- Expand the current mediation process to all out-of-network physicians and providers at an in-network facility, and to situations where patients are receiving surprise bills.
- Allow physicians to override health plans' use of "step therapy" to substitute prescribed drugs for chronically ill patients.

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.
- Improve access to quality mental health care services.
- Increase minimum age to buy tobacco products to 21.
- Ban texting while driving.
- Make state higher education and state agency campuses tobacco free.

Require Medical School Training and Licensure for All Who Practice Medicine

- Diagnoses and prescriptive authority must remain the purview of medical-school-trained, licensed physicians.

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 prescriber licensing boards to automatically register their licensees for 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.



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