



Health Care Coverage and Access

- Support efforts to increase the number of Texans with affordable, comprehensive health insurance, including:
 - » Offering tax credits to buy health insurance in the private market, providing COBRA coverage subsidies, and allowing portability of coverage;
 - » Expanding public and private market-based coverage and access to uninsured and low-wage working Texans; and,
 - » Supporting approval of 12-month postpartum Medicaid coverage for new mothers and other coverage expansion.
- Preserve current COVID-19 waivers for the utilization of telehealth, virtual and urgent care that have expanded access to convenient, affordable, and patient-centered care.
- Support payer policies that reduce red tape and improve patient access to care, including limits on prior authorization and care location policies.



Medicare, Medicaid and Uncompensated Care (UC)

- Support reimbursing hospital and physician services at rates that adequately ensure access to care.
- Support greater flexibility in the Medicaid program while ensuring a sufficient funding baseline that is related to the demand for services and adequately reimburses providers and preserves the Medicaid 1115 Waiver.
- Protect the flexibility needed to generate the non-federal share of Medicaid supplemental payments through locally generated solutions, such as intergovernmental transfers.
- Support fair and equitable hospital supplemental funding to ensure Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) payments and other supplemental payment programs available through Medicaid are commensurate with the level of services provided by public and private hospitals.
- Support continued use and expansion of Local Provider Participation Funds (LPPFs) to help finance regional health care programs.
- Ensure Medicare payment rates reflect the acuity of patients served in long-term care and rehabilitation facilities.
- Oppose Medicare site-neutral payment policies that unfairly penalize hospital outpatient departments (HOPDs).



Workforce

- Reduce physician, nursing, allied health and behavioral health workforce shortages through enhanced funding for faculty salaries, student scholarships, loan repayment, financial aid, and job training programs and to address increased staffing costs caused by the pandemic.
- Support adequate graduate medical education (GME) funding and medical residency training positions for community-based hospitals.
- Support increased funding in the state budget for the Professional Nursing Shortage Reduction Fund to increase RN graduates.

- Support efforts that promote safety, security and mitigate the risk of violence throughout the entire health care workplace.
- Support immigration, non-discrimination and cultural competency policies to recruit/retain qualified physicians, nurses, and health professionals.
- Oppose efforts to impose mandatory, arbitrary nurse-staffing ratios.
- Oppose proposals that allow establishment of a labor union without approval through a private ballot election.



Behavioral Health

- Support increased funding to ensure timely and appropriate access to inpatient, outpatient, and community-based behavioral health services.
- Support enforcement of federal and state behavioral health parity laws.
- Support the appropriate utilization of hospital emergency departments and revising the Texas Mental Health Code to streamline orders of protective custody and emergency detention orders.
- Support efforts to address the substance use disorder crisis across the continuum of care, including focusing additional resources on prevention and recovery, allowing appropriate sharing of patient information, and expanding access to evidence-based treatment.



Trauma and Public Health Preparedness

- Ensure consistent funding for the state's trauma care network that fairly compensates hospitals for providing life-saving care.
- Support efforts to improve vaccination rates for vaccine preventable diseases.
- Support expanded resources for public health data collection to assist in community protection and emergency response.
- Support regulatory relief and increased funding for public health/emergency preparedness and response efforts, including:
 - » Preserving appropriate liability protections for hospitals and clinicians;
 - » Addressing health care worker shortages and well-being, including allowing appropriate flexibility in medical licensure requirements; and,
 - » Strengthening supply chain coordination through reliable, timely availability of personal protective equipment, lab supplies, and medication.
- Provide additional funding to address the social determinants of health by reducing health care disparities, delivering population health interventions, and promoting healthy equity, prevention, wellness, and chronic disease management programs.
- Provide funding to public health agencies to update technology and staffing to support interoperability and efficiency with health care partners, including support for patient-reported test results to public health agencies.



Enhanced Continuum of Care

- Support legislative and regulatory changes that enhance the quality and cost effectiveness of care across the continuum, including:
 - » Sustaining the progress in modernizing the Stark Law and Anti-kickback regulations that better protect arrangements to promote value-based care, such as expanding exceptions and safe harbors for Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs) and modifying standards and CMS conditions of participation to facilitate integrated care.
 - » Providing incentives to physicians to participate in continuing medical education (CME) and patient safety programs that support team training and effective communication skills to improve patient care coordination and reduce preventable errors.
 - » Extending flexibilities that permanently allow acute-level, high-quality hospital care to be provided in a patient's home.



Quality and Patient Safety

- Support legislative and regulatory efforts that focus on enhancing quality and patient safety through:
 - » Sharing valid, reliable clinical quality, and patient safety data with appropriate confidentiality and liability protections;
 - » Implementing streamlined pay-for-performance methodologies to improve quality and avoid unnecessary costs and administrative burden;
 - » Aligning federal and state quality metrics in order to reduce duplication, costs, and administrative burden for providers;
 - » Utilizing high reliability principles to reduce medical errors and adverse events; and,
 - » Addressing the total cost of care through the value of early clinical intervention.



Insurance Reform

- Provide the Texas Department of Insurance (TDI) with greater authority to regulate health insurance plans and enable more employers and insurance carriers to provide affordable health care coverage in the health insurance marketplace.
- Support licensure of Preferred Provider Organizations (PPOs) and increased regulatory requirements and oversight of the business practices of health plans and their subcontractors, including third-party administrators.
- Support efforts to require PPOs and Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs) to develop and maintain adequate networks of physicians and other providers to reduce the exposure of patients to additional out-of-pocket costs.
- Protect consumers and providers from harmful network disruptions, including immunity from out-of-network charges for unanticipated changes by insurers to their provider networks during the contract year after consumers have selected their plan.
- Strengthen prompt-pay requirements with appropriate denial standards to ensure timely and accurate payments to providers and impose them on all payer sources.



Accountability and Transparency

- Support consumer access to meaningful price transparency and quality data for all health care providers and payers.
- Ensure fair and reasonable implementation of surprise medical billing rules that balance protecting patients and the burden on providers.
- Oppose efforts that would increase charity care requirements and/or negatively impact the tax liabilities of non-profit hospitals.



Health Information Technology (HIT)

- Advance appropriate use of health information technology systems that save lives, improve health outcomes and reduce costs by:
 - » Advancing value-based care and population health management models;
 - » Advocating for greater protections against cybersecurity threats that can compromise protected health information and patient safety;
 - » Promoting standards, functionality and workflows that improve efficiencies related to HIT connectivity and interoperability;
 - » Supporting the appropriate use of telehealth services through payment and service delivery models that improve access to care, preserve the physician/patient relationship, deliver high-quality care, and promote patient safety;
 - » Reducing manual, outdated, and duplicative mandatory reporting requirements and administrative burden; and,
 - » Promoting reasonable exceptions to information blocking that balance patient access with provider need.



Medical Liability and Tort Reform

- Protect state tort/compensation laws that provide fairness, predictability and efficiency in the civil justice system.
- Protect existing peer review and credentialing confidentiality provisions while safeguarding the ability to address clinical concerns and complaints.



End-of-Life Care

- Preserve the state's Advance Directives Act to facilitate effective communication between health care providers, patients, and family members in end-of-life care situations and to ensure a sound dispute resolution process.
- Support efforts to provide palliative care services to those with chronic, life-altering diseases or at the end-of-life.
- Oppose efforts to mandate "treatment until transfer" indefinitely.