



Health Care Coverage and Access

- Support efforts to increase the number of Texans with affordable, comprehensive health insurance, including:
 - » Offering tax credits to individuals to buy health insurance in the private market, providing COBRA coverage subsidies and allowing portability of coverage; and,
 - » Expanding public and private market-based coverage and access to uninsured and low-wage working Texans.
- 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.
- Provide additional funding and resources to address the social determinants of health by reducing health care disparities, delivering population health interventions, and promoting prevention, wellness and chronic disease management programs.



Medicare, Medicaid and Uncompensated Care (UC)

- Support reimbursement rates for hospital and physician services 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.
- Protect the flexibility needed to generate the non-federal share of Medicaid supplemental payments through locally generated solutions, such as intergovernmental transfers and local provider participation funds.
- 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.
- 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).



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 meaningful pay-for-performance methodologies to improve quality and avoid unnecessary costs;

- » Aligning federal and state quality metrics in order to reduce duplication, costs and administrative burden for providers; and,
- » Encouraging utilization of high reliability principles to reduce medical errors and adverse events.



Workforce

- Reduce the physician, nursing, allied health and behavioral health workforce shortages through enhanced funding for faculty salaries, student scholarships, loan repayment and financial aid, including the recruitment and retention of providers in rural and underserved communities.
- Support adequate Medicaid 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 registered nurse (RN) graduates.
- Support efforts that promote safety and security and mitigate the risk of violence throughout the entire health care workplace.
- Support immigration, non-discriminatory and cultural competency policies to recruit/retain qualified physicians, nurses and allied 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 funding to ensure timely and appropriate access to inpatient, outpatient and community-based behavioral health services, including funding for a new state mental health hospital in DFW.
- 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 permit physicians to initiate emergency detentions and orders of protective custody.
- Support legislative and regulatory efforts that address the substance abuse crisis across the continuum of care, including focusing additional resources on prevention and recovery, supporting safe opioid prescribing, allowing appropriate sharing of patient information, and expanding access to evidence-based treatment.



Enhanced Continuum of Care

- Support legislative and regulatory changes that enhance the quality and cost effectiveness of care across the continuum, including:
 - » Reforming the Stark and anti-kickback rules to permit greater physician/hospital collaboration on innovative health care delivery models to reduce inappropriate utilization and promote access to 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.
 - » Reducing the burdens associated with prior authorization requirements that inhibit the continuity of care.



Trauma and Emergency Readiness

- Support regulatory relief and increased funding for public health/emergency preparedness and response efforts, including:
 - » Providing appropriate liability protections for hospitals and clinicians;
 - » Addressing health care worker shortages and well-being; and,
 - » Strengthening supply chain coordination through reliable, timely availability of personal protective equipment, lab supplies and medication.
- Preserve a dedicated funding source for the state's trauma care network that fairly compensates hospitals for providing life-saving care.



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 to ensure timely and accurate payments to providers and impose them on all payor sources.
- Support federal legislation that mirrors Texas' successful surprise medical billing law.



Accountability and Transparency

- Support meaningful industry reforms that promote accountability and transparency in such areas as charity care, community benefit, charges to the uninsured, debt collection and drug pricing.
- Support industry efforts that provide meaningful information to consumers regarding the quality, safety and price of select health care services while opposing efforts to mandate hospital disclosure of privately negotiated charges with health plans.
- 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; and,
 - » Reducing manual, outdated and duplicative mandatory reporting requirements and administrative burden.



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.



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.

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