

Texas Update – October 2008

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Election Day Is Right Around the Corner! Get out the vote at your health center!

While we're long past the registration deadline, there are still proactive and politically neutral things you can do in the days before next Tuesday, November 4, to encourage your health center staff and patients to vote! Primarily, show everyone you think voting is important! Here are some tips from the Community Health Vote effort at NACHC:

- Add a line to your email signature reminding everyone to Vote November 4th!
- Hang a VOTE November 4th! poster in your office, your waiting room, and any other high traffic spot in your clinic.
- Lead by example – get out there and vote!

All too often, health center patients are marginalized from the democratic process. Let's start the process of changing that this election day.

TACHC's 25th Annual Conference a Success!

With a record-breaking turnout, TACHC's 25th Annual Conference held this year in Horseshoe Bay, TX, once again brought together community health center leadership, staff, providers, and board members for three packed days of education, networking, and celebration. In these volatile economic times, health centers came together with a focus on collaborating with partners to ensure continued quality care for their patients. Workforce issues were another key theme addressed in a variety of venues – from the General Membership meeting to clinical sessions to policy updates - as the primary care provider shortage is a significant barrier to the health center mission of providing access to care where it is needed most. Attendees left the conference well armed with a variety of tools related to the topics of media relations, disaster preparedness, clinical peer review, and much more. Keep an eye out for conference materials which will be posted in the Quick Links section of our website at www.tachc.org.

But Annual Conference this year was more than education and learning. Health centers celebrated TACHC's 25th anniversary in style. The 25th Anniversary Reception held Sunday evening, October 26th highlighted every TACHC member health center with displays showcasing the center's history, patient and staff success stories, and photos. The ballroom full of displays was a testament to the growth and success of the health center movement in Texas.

Thanks to all our members for making our 25th year exceptional. We look forward to 25 more years (at least!) of working together as **one voice** for the underserved people of Texas.

The Health Center Legislative Agenda – We need advocate support!

The 2009 Texas Legislative Session is an opportunity to highlight key health center issues and to gain crucial state support for the health center network providing primary and preventive care services to the uninsured and underserved. This year, health centers will be focusing on three key issues:

1. Medicaid reform – Ensure patients have access to health center services
2. Workforce – Consolidate, coordinate, and fund a robust loan repayment program for health care professionals who serve underserved areas
3. State Investment in Health Centers – Support community health centers with operational and infrastructure funding so they can expand to respond to the health needs of more underserved Texans

To accomplish our goals, TACHC will need the help of every health center advocate to speak with **one voice** for Texas's underserved people – and we need to recruit more advocates to join us! Forward this message to your colleagues and ask them to sign up to be a health center advocate by clicking [HERE](#).

How can you learn more?

TACHC will be holding a webcast for health center advocates in November to discuss the health center legislative agenda and how you can be involved in our efforts. **Health centers will not be successful this legislative session without grassroots support!** Members, check the TACHC list serve for webcast scheduling details in the coming days.

Health Centers in the News – Send us your stories!

By now, most of you have likely heard of TACHC's Earned Media Campaign to make it easy for health centers to get local media coverage for your health centers. If you haven't seen it yet, check out our media resource site: www.tachc.org/mediatools. Many centers are already getting coverage – check out our News page: <http://www.tachc.org/About/News.asp> for some examples of health center stories that promote your good work. Read about Waco Family Health Center (Heart of Texas Community Health Center) and their expansion to improve health care in their community. Learn about Community Health Centers of South Central Texas and their new site in Seguin. Great coverage everyone!

We need more! Any time your health center gets any media coverage – print, TV, or radio – let us know about it! Send us those op-eds you write, letters to the editor, and any other stories that highlight your health center. If you'd like more local media coverage, but aren't sure how to go about getting it, contact Katie Coburn at TACHC. We'll get you the technical assistance you need. You can also get started with some training materials on our [media tools webpage](#).

Forward this update to your friends – we need all the advocates we can get. Ask them to click [HERE](#) to register as a community health center advocate, and thanks!