

2019 Health Center Policy Priorities

➤ Budget

1. Ensure adequate funding for Medicaid/CHIP caseload growth.
2. Ensure adequate funding for the Healthy Texas Women (HTW) program. Both Senate and House 2020-2021 base budgets assume the 1115 women's health waiver will be approved by CMS, however this waiver was originally anticipated for approval for September 1, 2017 implementation, but remains pending. Pending approval, the General Revenue funding must be restored. Proposed cuts are also under consideration for a reduction in capacity building funding in HTW. This funding is essential for outreach, enrollment, and patient education in HTW.

➤ Address Critical Workforce Needs

3. Ensure adequate funding for Physician Education Loan Repayment Program (PELRP) to increase the loan repayment cap to be competitive with current levels of physician debt. Physician loan debt has increased significantly over the last decade since the PELRP repayment caps were set and should be increased to \$180,000 to remain competitive to attract physicians to practice in medically underserved areas.
4. Ensure adequate funding for the Family Practice Residency Program to support the 33 family medicine residency programs across the state, including 5 health center residency programs. Increase program budget appropriations to \$20 million for FY20-21.

➤ FQHC Value-Based Reimbursement Model (VBRM)

5. Enact legislation to establish a voluntary FQHC VBRM Demonstration Project – a primary care provider lead value based-payment pilot project that builds off of current FQHC payment methodology.

➤ Trauma-Informed Care

6. A rider to study a payment enhancement in Medicaid and CHIP claims for primary care providers who are certified in trauma-informed care. Comprehensive trauma-informed primary care is an opportunity for preventive mental health care that allows providers to identify trauma and its potential impact on mental and physical health. Preventive mental health care enables the health care system to provide early intervention before patients develop serious health conditions, substance use disorders, or mental health disorders often associated with physical and psychological trauma that costs the state millions.

➤ Improve Continuity of Coverage

7. Streamline Texas Medicaid/CHIP eligibility, enrollment, renewal timelines and income verification process to ensure enrollees maintain appropriate coverage. A bill (HB3151, Rep. Sheffield) passed Texas House in 85th Legislature unanimously, and will be refiled in the 86th Legislature.

➤ Telemedicine/Telehealth

8. Increase access through telemedicine/telehealth. Patients would benefit greatly from the implementation of telemedicine and telehealth technology to increase health care access, but current Medicaid/CHIP policy is unclear in how it applies to FQHCs.



TACHC

Texas Association of Community Health Centers