

Guarding the Patient-Physician Relationship

At the heart of the Texas Medical Association's legislative agenda is protecting the practice of medicine and the patient-physician relationship, whether from interference from insurers and other nonmedical entities, laws that lower the standard of care, or public health threats.

TMA's Top 10 Legislative Priorities

1. Stop scope-of-practice creep/Improve graduate medical education funding
2. Improve women's reproductive health
3. Increase physicians' Medicaid payments
4. Improve coverage for women and children on Medicaid
5. Protect 2003 medical liability reforms
6. Protect physician autonomy/Uphold corporate practice protections
7. Reduce prior authorization hassles
8. Protect vaccine laws/Modernize ImmTrac2
9. Improve network adequacy/Protect Texas' surprise-billing law
10. Ensure regulation and taxing of e-cigarettes

Stop scope-of-practice creep: Protect independent medical diagnosing, treatment, and prescribing as the practice of medicine; address current workforce shortages in a way that ensures all patients have access to the same high standard of care and keeps pace with Texas' outsized population growth.

Improve women's reproductive health: Provide clarity on how physicians can treat pregnant women safely while protecting the patient-physician relationship from criminal consequences under such laws.

Increase physicians' Medicaid payments: Help Texas physicians enhance their Medicaid panels and improve access to care with targeted payment increases, as physicians have not seen an enduring Medicaid payment increase in more than a decade. Avert driving down the number of physicians who are able to accept Medicaid patients or who are forced to take fewer of them because of low Medicaid payments.

Improve coverage for women and children on Medicaid: Expand comprehensive coverage of and secure additional funding and resources for maternal health care and behavioral/mental health care for women and children.

Protect 2003 medical liability reforms: Preserve Texas' landmark medical liability reforms, which continue to undergird a strong Texas physician workforce.

Protect physician autonomy/Uphold corporate practice protections: Protect physicians from being criminalized for the practice of medicine and keep nonmedical entities from interfering with patient care. As government and corporate interference with patient care grows more common, ensure physicians can exercise their independent medical judgment to do what's best for their patients and practices.

Reduce prior authorization hassles: Require health plans to provide 24/7 prior authorization processing, including on holidays and weekends, and eliminate prior authorizations altogether for patients with autoimmune disorders.

Protect vaccine laws/Modernize ImmTrac2: Protect Texas' good set of vaccine laws from any erosion in a vaccine-hesitant climate and upgrade the state's cumbersome vaccine registry.

Improve network adequacy/Protect Texas' surprise-billing law: Enhance enforcement of and accountability under state network adequacy laws and protect Texas' surprise-billing law from insurance company challenges.

Ensure regulation and taxing of e-cigarettes: Create an excise tax to deter youth from buying e-cigarettes and use the funds for vaping prevention and cessation programs.



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