

Help Texas physicians care for Medicaid patients

PRIORITY

Further enhance physicians' ability to care for Medicaid patients with fewer administrative hassles and payment rates that reflect the cost of providing care.

BACKGROUND

Texas Medicaid payment rates for pediatric labor and delivery codes were increased during the 2023 Texas legislative session for the first time in more than a decade. This set the stage to bolster access to care and enabled some physicians who participate in Medicaid to stay afloat.

Most physicians, however, did not benefit from this increase and Medicaid payments continue to lag behind Medicare and commercial rates as physicians struggle to keep their practice doors open. A Medicaid fee schedule supporting medical practices of all specialties is an important step to address severe shortages among subspecialists who care for patients with complex medical needs.

Further, administrative challenges and backlogs resulting from patients losing Medicaid or Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) coverage persist as the state conducts staggered eligibility redeterminations for those whose coverage was continuously maintained throughout the COVID-19 public health emergency. This is further complicated by health plan re-contracting that could require 43% of the state's total CHIP and State of Texas Access Reform Medicaid (STAR) program population to switch to a different managed care organization (MCO).

TMA encourages the Texas Legislature to take this opportunity for creative approaches to the ongoing challenges patients and physicians face within the Medicaid and CHIP programs.



TMA RECOMMENDATIONS

- Enact an across-the-board 10% Medicaid payment increase so physician practices caring for the complex needs of a diverse Medicaid population can stay viable.
- Increase funding for HHSC operations and enterprise systems to modernize the physician enrollment and credentialing processes via the Provider Enrollment and Management System (PEMS) and expedite patient enrollment and eligibility through the Texas Integrated Eligibility Redesign System (TIERS).
- Any proposed legislation should support continuing efforts to ensure a transparent, inclusive, and effective process for MCO procurement that includes opportunities for stakeholder involvement, consideration of MCO past performance in the Texas Medicaid program, and implementation of strategies to minimize disruptions for affected families.



Physicians Caring for Texans

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