

2023

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

- ★ Ensure patient safety through team-based care
- ★ Improve GME funding
- ★ Increase access and affordability
- ★ Preserve medical liability protections
- ★ Support payment parity for telemedicine



Protect Scope of Practice

- ▶ Support legislation that promotes the physician-led, team-based model of care, which values each member of the patient care team while protecting patient safety through appropriate physician involvement.
- ▶ Support uniform, evidence-based licensure pathways for physicians, as well as non-physician clinicians, based upon scope of practice.



Grow the Physician Workforce in TX

- ▶ Support enactment of legislation that increased the physician workforce by increasing funding for graduate medical education (GME) and expanding financial incentives to facilitate a physicians' ability to care for patients in rural and underserved communities.
- ▶ 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.
- ▶ Texas needs more residency positions to maintain the target ratio of 1.1-to-1 first-year GME slots per medical school graduate.
- ▶ The ratios of patient care physicians per 100,000 population remain among the lowest in the country, Texas ranks 42nd for active physicians (all specialties), 47th for primary care physicians, and 46th for general surgeons.



Increase Access And Affordability

- ▶ Support legislation that enhances access to timely, affordable, high-quality care for all patients. This includes:
 - Supporting targeted Medicaid payment and rate increases for new and established patient office exams as well as exams related to women's and children's health - preventive care, maternity services, and behavioral health.
 - Support targeting specialty physician payment increases for services critical to improving maternal health, keeping children in school, and ensuring coordinated care for children with special health care needs.
 - Supporting network adequacy and transparency standards for insurers.
 - Supporting legislation to stabilize health insurance exchanges.
 - Supporting access to affordable prescription drugs, including by regulating Pharmacy Benefit Managers.
 - Supporting enactment of legislation that alleviates arbitrary burdens in step therapy and prior authorization.
 - Opposing any legislation that would interfere with the physician-patient relationship and physicians' ability to provide evidence-based information and care to their patients.



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Preserve Medical Liability Protections

- ▶ Support protecting the 2003 tort reform law and oppose any efforts to modify the caps on noneconomic damages, and uphold protections for those providing emergency services.
- ▶ Support maintenance of the special liability standard for emergency department services, obstetrical units, and emergency surgery.
- ▶ Support enhancement of liability protections for physicians and health care providers during natural disasters and in the immediate aftermath.
- ▶ Oppose any effort that would limit Texas' medical liability reforms or liability safe harbors, or any proposals that would weaken the Texas Medical Board.



Support Payment Parity For Telemedicine

- ▶ Support the delivery of appropriate health care services, including the prescription of controlled substances, through telemedicine and other communications-based technologies.
- ▶ Institute payment parity such that covered services provided via telemedicine to a health plan enrollee by a contracted physician are paid at the same contracted rate as in-person visits. This ensures continuity of care and honors the patient-physician relationship by allowing patients and their established physicians to determine whether services should be provided in-person or virtually.



Increase Public Health Awareness

- ▶ Work to increase public awareness and implement evidence-based recommendations and best practices related to public health issues.
- ▶ Support funding to strengthen our public health care infrastructure and workforce, reduce health care disparities and establish a robust strategy to combat future public health emergencies.

ABOUT TOMA

The Texas Osteopathic Medical Association (TOMA) is the professional association of more than 1,600 osteopathic physicians (DOs) and medical students in the state. Osteopathic physicians are fully licensed to practice medicine in all specialty areas, including primary care, emergency medicine and surgery. While DOs and MDs have many things in common, DOs bring an extra dimension to the practice of medicine by combining medical expertise with a whole-person approach focused on listening and partnering with their patients.

The osteopathic medical profession is one of the fastest-growing segments of healthcare, representing more than 11% of physicians in the U.S.

TOMA advocates for the osteopathic profession to advance legislative and regulatory improvements and promote access to care.

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