



## Health care reform

*"Health is not a consumer good but a universal right, so access to health services cannot be a privilege." Pope Francis*

The Texas Conference of Catholic Bishops holds that health care is not a privilege, but a right that should be available to every human being. Health care is essential for the proper development of life and for human beings to flourish and reach their full potential, as they were created by God to be. Particular care must be offered to those who have special needs because of age, addiction, physical or mental disability.

That means that our public policy should work toward health care equity access and promotion, so that everyone has access to quality health care services with no disparity because of their race, ethnicity, citizenship, language preference or socio-economic status. Recognizing that prevention-oriented health care is better for our families, the bishops encourage health literacy and education, as well as the alleviation of food insecurity and hunger through expanded access to summer nutrition programs, school breakfast projects and nutritional awareness.

Other ways to achieve the bishops' vision of health care equity access includes legislation that ensures a core benefit plan for all, and legislation that sufficiently and fairly finances health care.

Specific to the needs of the vulnerable and poor, enrolling every child in the Children's

Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and Medicaid with 12-month continuous eligibility, opposing efforts to reduce eligibility or increase barriers to coverage, and giving particular concern to refugee resettlement with access to health care needs are important considerations.

Another vulnerable population is those who are the victims of human trafficking. Since almost 60 percent of human trafficking victims are seen by a health care professional, legislation to support the outreach and education of medical providers to accurately identify and help victims is critical to help eradicate human trafficking and provide care to victims.

Youth in foster care deserve the same level of medical care as any other child in Texas. Because they suffer at a higher rate than any other group of children from physical, developmental, dental and behavioral health conditions, it should be required that a child in foster care receives a health screening within 72 hours of entering care. In addition, Child Protective Services workers should be stationed in children's hospitals and foster care clinics, and the state should consider a new foster care clinic program similar to the Texas Medical Child Abuse Resources and Education System (MEDCARES).

# Where we stand

The TCCB has reviewed the following legislation for the 85th Texas Legislature:healthcare bills filed in the 85th Texas Legislature:



HB 2 would provide \$930 million in Rainy Day Funds to pay for Medicaid's shortfall. The TCCB supports this bill to pay for the uncompensated care offered in Catholic hospitals.



HB 10 / SB 860 ensures that patients with behavioral health issues have access to services similar to what federal law requires for physical health. The TCCB supports this bill to provide adequate support for the mentally ill.



HB 3993 / SB 1840, HB 2995 / SB 1578, and HB 3954 would each provide funding for communities without a hospital district. The TCCB supports these bills to provide adequate health-care throughout Texas.



HB 2697 / SB 1107 would expand the use of telehealth to ensure that rural Texans have access to specialists and unique medical services. The TCCB supports this bill to ensure access to care in hard-to-reach communities.



HB 13 establishes a state grant that would match donations to organizations providing mental health programs. The TCCB supports this bill to increase mental health services in Texas.

## Catholic Health Care Serving Texas



### CATHOLIC HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES <sup>3</sup>

Total: 42,504

Part Time Personnel  
5,584

Full Time Personnel  
36,920

### CATHOLIC HEALTH FACILITIES <sup>1</sup>

ACUTE CARE HOSPITALS

58

SKILLED NURSING FACILITIES

5

INDIGENT CARE CLINICS

23

ADDITIONAL CATHOLIC SPONSORED SERVICES

Includes hospice, home health, assisted living, senior housing, and continuing care

19



INPATIENT ADMISSIONS

324,286

EMERGENCY ROOM VISITS

1,375,559

OUTPATIENT VISITS <sup>2</sup>

5,364,376

### SERVING VULNERABLE POPULATIONS AND OUR NATION'S SENIORS

141,321

Medicare Inpatient  
Admissions

56,672

Medicaid Inpatient  
Admissions <sup>3</sup>

43.6%

% Medicare  
Admissions

17.5%

% Medicaid  
Admissions <sup>3</sup>

4,499,500

State  
Uninsured

16.9%

% of State  
Population <sup>2</sup>

Catholic health care has a long history of serving people in need, including those with no access to health care services and the millions of low-income children, adults, elderly and disabled who rely on the Medicare and Medicaid programs. The Catholic health ministry is committed to its mission of providing quality care to everyone in our communities, and to using the resources we have for the greatest community benefit.

Source: <sup>1</sup> Facilities that report to the Catholic Health Association of the United States including Catholic and other-than-Catholic facilities which are owned and operated by Catholic health systems.

<sup>2</sup> Kaiser Family Foundation estimates based on the Census Bureau's March 2015 Current Population Survey (CPS: Annual Social and Economic Supplements).

<sup>3</sup> 2014 American Hospital Association Annual Survey