

# TEXAS-STYLE “REFORM” FAILS PATIENTS Costs Up, Access Down

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Some continue to suggest that the solution to our nation’s health care problem is to enact Texas-style, anti-patient laws in the guise of “reform.” Policymakers should be wary of using Texas as a model. When insurance lobbyists rammed through legal changes that were designed to severely limit the legal rights of Texas patients 2003, we heard rhetoric promising dramatic improvements in the cost and access of health care.

What has actually happened?

Both overall health care spending and individual out-of-pocket health insurance expenses have risen faster than the national average in Texas over the last decade. Meanwhile, with a quarter of Texans without health insurance and rural and underserved communities all across the state suffering from an acute shortage of primary care physicians, large segments of the Texas population are struggling to gain access to the care they need.

## Health Care Costs in Texas

- Family health insurance premiums for Texas families are up 92% - more than 4.5 times faster than income.<sup>1</sup>
- Medicare spending has risen 16% faster than the national average since Texas restricted the legal rights of patients.<sup>2</sup>
- 4 of the nation’s 15 most expensive health markets as measured by Medicare spending per enrollee are in Texas. And 10 of the costliest 15 markets are in states with the highest Medicare spending per enrollee, according to data compiled by the Dartmouth Atlas of health care.

## Access to Health Care in Texas

- Texas has the nation’s highest rate of uninsured with 24.5% of Texans without health insurance.<sup>3</sup>
- Texas ranks 45<sup>th</sup> in the number of doctors per capita, according to the Texas Medical Association.<sup>4</sup>
- Rural and underserved communities continue to struggle to attract primary care physicians. Nearly half of all Texas counties do not meet the national standard of having 1 doctor for every 3,500 people.<sup>5</sup>
- Researchers can find no evidence that limits on patient rights have had an impact on the number of physicians providing direct patient care.<sup>6</sup>

*For More Information:*

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<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.familiesusa.org/assets/pdfs/costly-coverage/texas.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.texaswatch.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/MedicareSpending-HealthCosts.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> See [http://pubdb3.census.gov/macro/032007/health/h06\\_000.htm](http://pubdb3.census.gov/macro/032007/health/h06_000.htm)

<sup>4</sup> See <http://www.texmed.org/Template.aspx?id=5427>

<sup>5</sup> See <http://www.tafp.org/news/stories/attachments/090601releaseHB2154.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> See [http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=1139190](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1139190)

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