

# Grow the Physician Workforce in Texas

Texas' population, at 29.5 million in 2021, is projected to reach 35 million by 2030. During the past year, an average of 850 people were added to the state each day. Meanwhile Texans – having experienced the COVID-19 pandemic – have a greater awareness of physicians' lifesaving work and how the health of every Texan depends directly on access to medical care.

Physicians are uniquely qualified to lead the health care team. They provide the highest level of medical care to Texans, and all Texans, regardless of geographic location, deserve that. Texas should invest in policies and funding to stabilize the physician workforce and grow GME so Texas graduates can train in the state and meet the health care needs of our rapidly growing population.

## TMA's Legislative Recommendations

- **Stabilize physician practice viability and patient access** to medical care by adopting policies that:
  - Pay physicians fairly to help keep practice doors open.
  - Safeguard physician practice liability protections.
  - Promote physician autonomy in medical decision-making.
- **Keep pace with the Texas' record-setting population gains** by allocating **additional** funds in the 2024-25 budget for the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's physician development programs:
  - \$34 million for the State GME Expansion Grant Program to maintain residency positions created through the program to date, and to maintain the 1.1-1 state target ratio.
  - \$1 million to activate the State Rural Training Track Grant Program for creation of rural residency training programs (HB 1065 passed in 2019 but was not funded).
  - \$30 million one-time endowment to sustain the State Physician Education Loan Repayment Program and recruit physicians to the state's most underserved areas.
  - \$20.5 million to replace recent budget cuts to the Family Practice Residency Program and enable annual grants of \$15,000 per family medicine resident.
  - \$2.14 million for the Joint Admission Medical Program so it can keep pace with recent increases in medical school enrollments.
- **Ensure sufficient state formula funding** to medical schools to sustain the state's support for medical education and help offset the faculty cost for training residents.
- **Maintain robust physician workforce data collection and analysis** by the Texas Health Professions Resource Center at the Department of State Health Services to monitor the impact of the pandemic on physician supply and distribution.



## Graduate Medical Education (GME) Is Key to Texas Physician Growth

Texas has 8.8% of the U.S. population but only 7.3% of the nation's active physicians. The ratios of patient care physicians per 100,000 population remain among the lowest in the country, ranking 42nd for active physicians (all specialties), 47th for primary care physicians, and 46th for general surgeons.

With six new medical schools since 2016 and another opening in 2023, Texas needs more residency positions to maintain the target ratio of 1.1-to-1 first-year GME slots per medical school graduate.



Physicians Caring for Texans

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