

Dear Friends of the Institute,

We are pleased to provide you with a special Board Retreat Report of the Texas Health Institute Newsletter. The [Texas Health Institute](#) (THI) is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit, independent organization that serves as an honest broker of information to promote dialogue among all healthcare stakeholders and to enable policymakers to more thoroughly explore health policy issues and make informed decisions.

Addressing public health and healthcare issues in a state as geographically, ethnically and socio-economically diverse as Texas is an ongoing challenge. Our state's demographics and restrictive healthcare access create issues that have the potential to impact our state well into the future.

Current policies to address issues such as the uninsured rate, obesity and long-term care will not be enough to meet the needs of our growing population. Accordingly, THI is identifying priorities and developing strategies to improve the health of Texans and their communities.

In lieu of the Texas Health Institute's regular May newsletter, we are providing you with a summary of health policy priorities identified by the THI board of trustees at their May 1, 2007 retreat. THI will be releasing a special edition of our newsletter in mid-June summarizing the 80th Texas State Legislative Session health policy activities and their impact on priorities of THI.

Thank you to the following board members who were able to participate in our May retreat:

- **Ron Anderson**
- **Robert Bernstein**
- **Richard Bettis**
- **Jennifer Coleman**
- **Joan Colgin**
- **Hardy Loe**
- **Ben McKibbens**
- **Rick Merrill**
- **Donna Meyer**
- **Camille D. Miller**
- **Maribess Miller**
- **Carol Paret**
- **Dayland Parsons**
- **Darren Rodgers**
- **George Russell**
- **Dana Sellers**
- **Charlotte Scott**
- **Steve Shelton**
(Representing Ben Raimer)
- **Kim Slocum**
- **Barbara Slover**
- **Tim Von Dohlen**
- **Walter Wilkerson**



Camille Miller
President/CEO

Sincerely,

Camille D. Miller
President & CEO

Texas Health Institute Priorities – A Three-Year Plan

Focusing Our Direction

Priority One – Uninsured / Access

The Texas Health Institute launched a major educational initiative in January, [A Vision for Change: Policy Solutions for Increasing Health Coverage in Texas](#), to increase health coverage for the uninsured in Texas by almost 50% and to measure the economic and fiscal impact of increasing Texans' access to health coverage. THI board members have identified four areas of emphasis and focus for continuing this priority area work:

- *Education of Policy Makers* – THI will conduct Uninsured / Access Health Policy Forums to provide elected officials, their staff and stakeholders with balanced, non partisan information in a "safe harbor" environment.
- *Evidence-Based Models* – THI will research and profile successful national and international models that address providing access to the uninsured and underinsured.
- *Public Awareness and Education* – THI will continue to develop strategies, such as editorial board tours and press releases to provide accurate and balanced information to the public regarding policy options and grassroots activities to improve healthcare access.
- *Monitoring and Evaluation System / Updating the Data* – THI will develop evaluation methods to measure the outcomes of policy development and grassroots efforts.

Priority Two – Obesity

Working with groups such as the [Partnership for a Healthy Texas](#), THI is identifying evidence-based remedies which will have the greatest impact on obesity in Texas and help children and adults achieve better health. Board members have identified four specific roles for THI:

- *Policy Education and Development* - THI will continue to focus on initiatives to aid legislative policy development focusing specifically on the identification of sources to fund healthier school menus, profiles of outcomes-based community health improvement work and research on provider reimbursement for patient education.
- *Return on Investment* – THI will identify and provide evidence-based data illustrating the dollars and lives that can be saved by implementing policies and programs to prevent obesity.
- *Community Health Improvement* - THI will play a role in information development, community organization and technical assistance to foster grassroots efforts to reverse the current obesity trends in Texas.
- *Education* – THI will launch a broad educational initiative by facilitating discussion among diverse stakeholders and by convening policy decision makers to address the causes of obesity and how to alleviate it.

Priority Three – Mental Health Transformation

THI is partnering with the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) and other state and federal agencies in a statewide effort related to mental health transformation which emphasizes early intervention and coordination of services across multiple state and local agencies. This focus includes five major roles for THI:

- *Public education and awareness* – THI will identify and provide recommendations on solutions that can be implemented simultaneously to include community-based initiatives, public policy options and media educational efforts.
- *Training and collaboration between all health professionals* - THI will serve as a communication link to grow community collaboration across the state as these communities address behavioral health issues and needs.
- *Environmental assessment* – THI will conduct an environmental assessment of transformation to identify who, what, where and why that is needed for improvement and transformation.
- *Infrastructure* – THI will look at community-driven and state infrastructure that is supportive of successful mental health treatment and recovery.
- *Implementation of effective evidence-based research treatment* – THI will encourage and support collaboration among researchers and practitioners so that research is effectively and efficiently used on workable solutions.

Priority Four – Border Health

Partnering with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Senior Management Official to Texas, CDC Office of Strategy & Innovation (OSI), National Network of Public Health Institutes (NNPHI), Texas Department of State Health Services, Texas Health and Human Services Commission, the US-Mexico Border Commission and other strategic partners, the Texas Health Institute will facilitate the development of a comprehensive strategic plan that improves program coordination to leverage resources and ultimately strengthen the public health infrastructure along the Texas-Mexico border. THI will concentrate on four phases:

- *Assessment of existing programs across all sources of funding* – THI will assess current programs and projects in the planning and implementation stages at the federal, state, local and private sector levels.
- *Identification of opportunities* – THI will identify the key players currently involved as well as those who should be involved in addressing border health issues.
- *Development of a strategic plan* – THI will design a ten-year strategic plan to address border health issues which will focus on community-based initiatives, pilot demonstration projects and policy education.
- *Implementation and monitoring of plan* – With buy-in from stakeholder groups and partners, THI will facilitate the implementation of the plan and provide outcomes measurement.

Priority Five – Long-Term Care

The Texas Health Institute is engaging long-term care (LTC) providers, experts, payers and other key stakeholders in a dialogue that identifies and prioritizes core LTC issues and policy options that require immediate attention by state decision makers. Board recommendations for long-term care issues include:

- *Enhancement of long-term care industry council structure and sustainability* – THI will assist council leadership in identifying additional council member representation and in exploring state, federal and private funding opportunities.
- *Policy options and tracking* – Drawing on information from the [Long-Term Care Health Policy Brief](#), completed in early 2007, THI will develop a report providing evidence-based solutions to address the growing challenges facing long-term care providers and consumers (Similar to THI's [Vision for Change](#) report).
- *Public awareness and education* – THI will create a public education and awareness media campaign that provides a definition of long-term care, a profile of the LTC landscape in Texas and LTC policy options for the 81st Legislative Session.

Priority Six – Public Health

THI is involved in a number of public health initiatives including a new eight state genetics and newborn screening regional collaborative Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) grant. We will report more on these in the coming months.

Supporting THI Projects

Why should you care about the uninsured in Texas?

- ▶ More than \$6.5 billion is spent in Texas annually on uncompensated acute care services.
- ▶ Already overcrowded hospital emergency departments have become primary care for the uninsured which reduces access to care for all, regardless of ability to pay.
- ▶ Almost one in three Texans under the age of 65 are without health insurance.

Over the next three years, THI will work to reduce the number of uninsured Texans by almost half or by 2.75 million. Our research indicates that this 50% reduction in uninsured has the potential to pump \$9.6 billion into the state economy, create 90,000 new permanent jobs, and generate about \$160 million in new state tax revenue.

These are pretty exciting projections, and what's even more exciting is that you can have a direct impact in helping us make these projections a reality by becoming a [Friend of the Institute](#). With your tax-deductible contribution of \$100 or more to the Institute you will support our work in developing workable solutions to improve access to care for all Texans.

Please join us in ensuring that policy decision-makers have a vision for the future of healthcare access through workable, evidence-based options. We welcome your ideas, participation and donations to support our work. Through your generous gift, you confirm the importance of THI and our commitment to improve the health of Texans and their communities.

Coming in the June THI Newsletter

- **A Vision for Change - A Look at the Impact of the Texas State Legislature's 80th Session on Health Policy Effecting the Uninsured**
- **Mountain States Genetics Regional Collaborative Center – Work THI is Facilitating on Genetics and Newborn Screening**
- **Public Health – A Definition of Public Health that Might Surprise You**
- **National Network of Public Health Institutes – A New Role for THI's CEO**
- **Mental Health Transformation – Important Conferences and Symposiums Coming in August**

About the Texas Health Institute and the THI Newsletter

Our mission is to provide leadership to improve the health of Texans and their communities through education, research, and health policy development.

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Editor: [Delia Presley](#)

The Texas Health Institute (THI) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization focused on the development of health policy solutions to improve the lives of Texans and their communities. From acting as an honest broker and hosting unbiased health policy forums that facilitate dialogue among policymakers and other healthcare stakeholders, to creating a vision of an improved future healthcare system, THI is a think tank – providing evidence-based policy options and solutions as well as innovative, “outside the box” collaborative options to improve the health of Texans and their communities.

The THI newsletter is a monthly publication of the Texas Health Institute written to update THI board of trustee members and Friends of the Institute.

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