

Advancing Public Policy during the 85th Texas Legislature: What Can I Do?

Commitment to Care is the Vehicle

The Commitment to Care (C to C) Initiative kicked off just over two years ago in an effort to elevate the quality of care for Texas seniors, and much has improved since then. The coordinated effort of long term care providers, senior care advocates, state legislators and regulators aim to achieve all of the four foundational pillars of C to C:

- Improve Survey Outcomes
- Improve Clinical Outcomes
- Create Workforce Stability
- Advance Public Policy

This portion of the C to C Quality Topic of the Month article focuses on the elements supporting **Advancing Public Policy**.

THCA Leading the Charge

In order for Long Term Care to be successful in this 85th Legislative Session, all providers will need to communicate a united message. Scot Kibbe, Director of Government Relations at THCA coordinates all communications at the Capitol on the part of THCA. He tracks the bills that are associated with Long Term Care/Assisted Living, testimony by members and or THCA staff and daily walks the halls of the Capitol making sure that Texas Legislators have a connection to THCA and know THCA's focus for the session.

The THCA Board of Directors and staff have worked tirelessly to gain legislative support for the following two bills, that if passed could do much to address the Medicaid funding short fall.

Senate Bill 1130 by Sen. Hinojosa would address long term care's Medicaid funding short fall by allowing federal funds to be used to enhance Medicaid rates for nursing home residents. This is funding being used in 44 other states and would not require any money from the state.

Senate Bill 890 by Sen. Kolkhorst and House Bill 2570 by Rep. Clardy are identical bills that would place a four-year moratorium on the addition of new Medicaid beds. This would help facilities meet their staffing needs as well as cover their costs.

Member Charge – Here’s where YOU come in!

STEP ONE: To be successful, we need everyone who cares about our state’s nursing facilities to let their voice be heard as soon as possible. If you are able, come to the Capitol and visit your legislators. Contact Scot Kibbe, at skibbe@txhca.org and he will help to organize your visit.

STEP TWO: THCA is charging all nursing facility Administrators and DON’s to call their representative during the month of March. It is unlikely that you will get a chance to actually speak to your representative but their staffer will make a note of your support for the bills you mention.

Please call today and ask your legislators to support SB 1130 and SB 890/HB 2570.

To find out who your state representative and state senator are and their phone numbers, type in your address to the link below. If there is a different legislator for your facility and home address, please call both legislators.

www.fyi.legis.state.tx.us

Here is a sample of what you might say on the call:

My name is _____ and I am the Administrator/Director of Nursing at (your facility) in Representative _____'s/ Senator _____'s district.
Please let the Representative/Senator know that we support Senate Bill 1130, which will address our underfunding without using state revenue.
We also support Senate Bill 890 by Senator Kolchhorst and House Bill 2570, which will help nursing homes have the staff to better meet residents' needs.

My phone number is _____. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or if we can ever be of assistance to your office. Thank you!

After you call, please send Scot an e-mail at skibbe@txhca.org to let him know who you called and what, if any, response you received.

These calls will take only a couple of minutes but can make a significant difference for the future of long term care in Texas.

STEP THREE: Send a personal letter to your representative today. Take advantage of the draft letters that have been created for your use and get yours in the mail today.

Thank you!
“If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself.” – Henry Ford

For more information on the 85th Legislative session or anything at the Capital contact Scot Kibbe, at skibbe@txhca.org.