

**Greater El Paso Chamber of Commerce January 27, 2015**

**Resolution of the Governing Board in support of The Texas Way, a private market-based health insurance coverage program that will help low-income Texans have better, more affordable insurance options. This initiative encourages the Texas Legislature to leverage federal funds to develop a private health insurance option for low-income Texans who are ineligible for insurance through their employers and who do not qualify for health marketplace subsidies.**

Thus far, the Texas Legislature has not accepted federal funds through the Affordable Care Act (ACA) to expand Medicaid coverage to individuals whose income levels are above the limit for Medicaid eligibility and whose income levels fall below the threshold for health insurance marketplace subsidies.

The Greater El Paso Chamber of Commerce has long been a supporter of Medicaid Expansion. Texas has more uninsured people (24 percent of the population) than any other state, and El Paso has one of the highest uninsured rates of any city in Texas at 34 percent. Diminished access to healthcare threatens these individuals, and it creates tremendous economic inefficiencies in the healthcare sector and beyond.

Individuals who do not have health insurance often do not seek treatment until they are at a crisis point, usually receiving care through one of the most expensive sources available, the emergency room. Statewide, local property taxpayers fund more than $1 billion in indigent healthcare services.

Furthermore, these inefficiencies in treatment result in higher insurance premiums for Texas families, who pay an average of $1,800 more per year to shoulder the heavy burden of care provided to the uninsured.

Meanwhile, Texas hospitals are sustaining $13 billion in funding cuts to pay for increasing access to health insurance coverage for individuals.

The Texas Way will utilize federal funds, already provided by hospitals and other healthcare providers through reduced payments over the next 10 years, to extend coverage for 1.05 million people.

Assisting veterans is a key element of the Texas Way, and for the Chamber’s support of the initiative. Not all veterans qualify for free healthcare through the Department of Veterans Affairs. Only 8.9 million veterans nationwide are enrolled in VA health coverage, and Texas leads the nation with more than 130,000 uninsured veterans. Approximately 48,900 of those uninsured veterans would qualify for coverage under the Texas Way.

This solution will reduce significantly the tax burden on local property taxpayers currently paying for indigent healthcare services. Furthermore, of the $400 million in tax penalties facing small employers who cannot afford to provide health insurance benefits to their employees, between $266 million and $399 million would be eliminated by the Texas Way.

This initiative is a way for Texas to do well by doing good. The economic benefits are a critical concern, but they are secondary to the larger mission of ensuring that everyone has adequate health insurance coverage.

This resolution was presented to and passed by the Governing Board of the Greater El Paso Chamber of Commerce on Tuesday, January 27, 2015.

Presented to and passed by the Governing Board, Tuesday, January 27, 2015.



|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Gary Borsch, Chair of the Board |  | Richard E. Dayoub, President and CEO |