

July 13, 2020

Dear Governor Abbott,

Thank you for your leadership and the tremendous efforts you and your staff members are leading on behalf of all Texans. We write with urgency to convey our concerns about the impact COVID-19 has had on our primary care and health systems and additional steps needed to protect our state's primary care system.

Since 2012, Texas Health Institute has collaborated with the Texas Medical Home Initiative to co-lead the [Texas Primary Care Consortium](#). The consortium serves as a neutral convener for diverse stakeholders to connect, collaborate, and strengthen our primary care system for the health of all Texans. The escalating COVID-19 pandemic has had an unprecedented impact on our primary care systems.

To that end, we have developed a brief evidence-based, data-driven, stakeholder-informed [issue brief](#) documenting the extent of current impact on our state's primary care systems, and our collective ability to address the health needs of all Texans.

Key findings from our issue brief include:

- Imminent threat to the sustainability of our state's health system
- Increasing chronic disease burden disproportionately impacting high-risk Texans i.e. our rural, elderly, uninsured, disabled, and minority populations
- Growing uninsured population
- Challenges with access to care during COVID-19

Based on these findings, there is an immediate need to advance a statewide, multi-stakeholder driven, consensus based forward-looking approach to strengthening our primary care systems and ensure the health of all Texans. We are aware of your efforts currently underway to pursue a forward-looking approach across systems, but we believe additional steps are needed to understand the specific implications of this pandemic on our primary care systems and ways to mitigate this impact during future pandemics and/or emergencies. To that end, we recommend coordinated, strategic, multi-sectoral efforts that:

- Mitigates the immediate impact COVID-19 has had on our communities and health systems including but not limited to ongoing federal and state policy cum funding support
- Organizes a consensus panel on primary care and health system transformation that helps us pursue a forward-looking approach on systems level changes with specific focus on value based payment reform, increasing access to care, protecting high-risk Texans, and advancing a Texas approach to our growing uninsured population.

The consortium is committed to working with your administration, our elected officials, and our health systems partners and stakeholders to support the aforementioned efforts. We request your prompt attention and leadership on this issue immediately.

Sincerely,

Ankit Sanghavi BDS, MPH

Sue Bornstein MD, FACP

Executive Director, Texas Health Institute
Co-lead, Texas Primary Care Consortium

Executive Director, Texas Medical Home Initiative
Co-lead, Texas Primary Care Consortium

CC: Members of the Texas Legislature

The following organizations work each day to improve the health of all Texans and support our call for an immediate focus on protecting our health system and pursue a forward-looking, consensus-based approach on primary care and health system transformation. A healthy Texas is foundational to a resilient and growing Texas!

List of Organizations: