July 23, 2020

The Honorable Greg Abbott
Governor of Texas
1100 Congress Ave
Austin, Texas 78701

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 an 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 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,

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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!

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (District XI, Texas)  
American Heart Association  
Austin Regional Clinic  
Catalyst Health Network  
Children's Comprehensive Care Clinic  
CHRISTUS Health  
Coalition of Texans with Disabilities  
Coryell Health  
Dell Children's Medical Group  
East Texas Community Clinics  
Gandhi for Texas  
Genesis Physicians Group, Inc.  
Giandana Healthcare Consulting, LLC  
GOH Medical, PA  
Houston Methodist  
It’s Time Texas  
La Esperanza Clinic, Inc
National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions
National Committee for Quality Assurance
People’s Community Clinic
Permian Basin Petroleum Association
Premier Family Physicians
Rio Grande Valley Health Alliance
South Texas Physician Allilance
Texas Academy of Family Physicians
Texas Association of Community Health Centers
Texas Association of Community Health Plans
Texas Association of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
Texas Chapter of the American College of Physicians
Texas Health Institute
Texas Medical Association
Texas Nurses Association
Texas Parent to Parent
Texas Pediatric Society
Texas Rural Health Association
The Perryman Group
The Stanzel Family Foundation, Inc.
TMF Health Quality Institute
TORCH - Texas Organization of Rural and Community Hospitals
VillageMD
Working Partner LLC