

Methodist Healthcare Ministries' public policy agenda and advocacy efforts are directed by the Social Principles of The United Methodist Church. Guided by its mission of "Serving Humanity to Honor God," our vision is to be the leader for improving wellness of the least served. Our strategic focus is to advance health equity by creating fair and just opportunities for every person to reach their full potential for health and life and contribute to that of others.



Access to Affordable and Quality Health Care

Secure comprehensive coverage benefits

- Address Texas' high uninsured rate by increasing access to comprehensive and high quality health care coverage for low-income, uninsured adults.



Children's Health

Support children's health care coverage

- Invest in school-based healthcare services to cover all Medicaid-eligible students.
- Address barriers in Medicaid or CHIP by simplifying the eligibility process and conducting outreach to ensure eligible children are enrolled.
- Remove barriers preventing parents from enrolling their children in Medicaid or CHIP Perinate programs after childbirth.
- Invest in early childhood intervention services to retain current contracted providers and ensure children with developmental delays or disabilities are able to reach developmental milestones.

Address childhood obesity/diabetes prevention

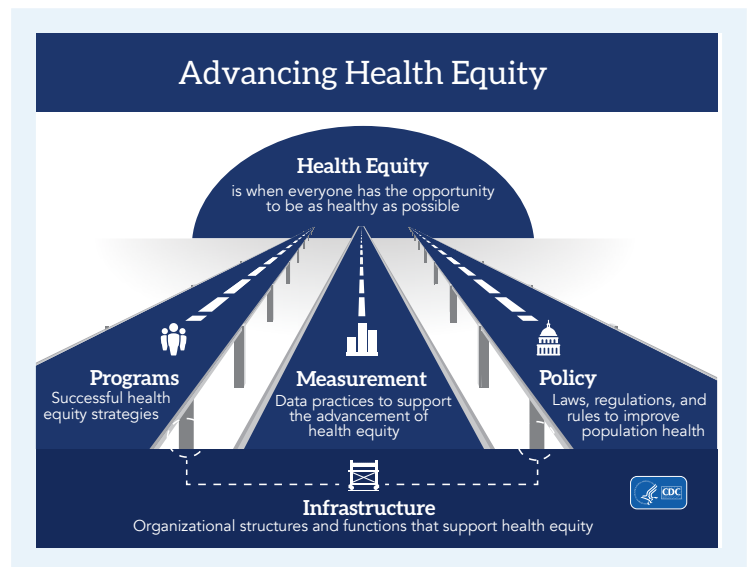
- Promote access to recess, physical activity and health education in schools.
- Invest in safe accessible paths for students to get to school on foot or bike and encourage a healthy and active lifestyle.

Support foster care and kinship care

- Invest in evidence-based family preservation services, including mental health and substance use services, proven to keep children from entering the foster care system.
- Ensure kinship caregivers who volunteer as foster parents receive 100 percent of the foster care rate.
- Support foster care rate modernization that tailor payments for services based on the individuals needs of each child.

Address domestic violence and child abuse

- Strengthen and expand efforts that educate youths, families and communities on child abuse, family violence or dating violence.
- Safeguard domestic abuse victims and the public from violence by prioritizing meaningful implementation of existing regulations on firearm surrender protocols.



- Support gun safety and prevention efforts that establish standards for responsible gun ownership and ensure children are not likely to gain access to unsupervised access to firearms.



Women's Health

Support healthcare coverage for women

- Extend Medicaid coverage for postpartum women to 12-months.
- Invest in the Family Planning Program to provide affordable preventive health care, especially in rural communities.
- Address enrollment barriers in the Healthy Texas Women program with HTW navigators and a simplified application.
- Ensure a smooth transition for HTW providers from fee-for-service to managed care to avoid disruptions in health care services.

Support reproductive health & access to contraceptives

- Improve access to contraception by including it as a covered benefit through CHIP.
- Direct health plans to allow dispensing up to 12 months of birth control supplies.



Behavioral Health

Detect and treat mental illness before a crisis

- Promote adoption of Collaborative Care services among pediatric primary care providers.
- Scale up programs of the Texas Child Mental Health Care Consortium and leverage expertise of state-funded medical schools to expand access to services.

Target interventions for high-risk populations

- Increase inpatient and outpatient community psychiatric bed capacity.
- Adopt Multisystemic Therapy as a Medicaid benefit to reduce youth violence.
- Incentivize Coordinated Specialty Care to treat first episode psychosis.
- Ensure access to crisis intervention by promoting the funding of Pediatric Crisis Stabilization and Response Teams.



Healthcare Workforce

Support funding for healthcare provider reimbursement rates and competitive salaries

- Increase funding for provider salaries and benefits to mental health professionals, including peer specialist.
- Adjust Medicaid dental reimbursement rates to reflect today's dollars.

Support loan repayment programs for health professionals

- Increase funding for the Mental Health Loan Repayment Program.
- Expand the Nursing Faculty Loan Repayment Assistance Program to include part-time faculty.
- Fund the Dental Education Loan Repayment Program to encourage dentists to practice in underserved areas.

Support funding for graduate medical education and provider training programs

- Increase funding for the Nursing Shortage Reduction Program to increase the nursing pipeline.
- Ensure clinical training sites are available to train and increase the nursing workforce.

Expand scope of practice for providers

- Enable advance practice registered nurses to practice to the fullest extent of their training and education.



Public Health

Improve health literacy education and training for patients and providers

- Examine the impact of low health literacy on health care cost and quality outcomes, especially among Texans who have or are at risk of developing a chronic disease.

Support access to vaccinations

- Direct DSHS to promote awareness of vaccination through culturally appropriate immunization literacy campaigns.
- Support funding for the Adult Safety Net Program to include the influenza vaccine.
- Enhance functionality of Texas' immunization registry to improve record retention.



Food Security & Nutrition

Support state and federal food assistance programs

- Modernize the Texas Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) to remove outdated eligibility requirements.
- Increase access to the SNAP Program to include eligible college students.
- Promote access to fresh fruits and vegetables by funding SNAP incentive programs.
- Ensure formerly incarcerated individuals have access to support programs by pre-registering them for SNAP benefits prior to release.

Support food banks and food pantries

- Bolster the food assistance infrastructure to increase access to fresh and healthy food outlets.

Address obesity and diabetes prevention

- Implement cost-saving initiatives in Medicaid that incorporate evidence-based obesity treatments and address the social drivers of health.



Public Infrastructure

Support affordable housing

- Increase equitable access to affordable housing for low-income renters.

Support funding for broadband infrastructure

- Promote digital inclusion efforts and ensure equitable access to affordable broadband services.

Support water infrastructure

- Promote coordinated outreach and technical support for economically distressed areas and rural communities to qualify for water development funds.

Support public utility infrastructure

- Incorporate a public health framework in the Public Utility Commission of Texas administrative structures.



Economic Mobility

Address financial security

- Increase the state minimum wage to ensure fair compensation and help struggling households achieve self-sufficiency.

