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Nursing Homes, Advocates Warn of Mass Closures

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APRIL CASTRO, Associated Press Writer

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Nursing home advocates say budget proposals to cut Medicaid reimbursement rates by 10 percent underestimate the impact of cuts.

Tim Graves, president and CEO of the Texas Health Care Association, said Thursday the true loss to providers would be closer to 33 percent. That's largely because of changes in the federal-state share formula triggered by the end of economic stimulus money.

The Legislature is grappling with a revenue shortfall of at least \$15 billion — \$27 billion by some estimates. Early proposals have slashed reimbursement rates for nursing homes, hospitals and physicians that offer Medicaid.

Advocates say the cuts would be detrimental for about 550 nursing homes in Texas, serving about 45,000 patients that depend on Medicaid.

The budget still has far to go before being finalized.

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