



ON THE NEWSSTAND



NEWS INDEX



- Obituaries
- Letters to the Editor
- 2 Minutes with TMN
- Trinidad News

COLUMNISTS

- Loretta Humble
- Jeff Davis
- Emily Lundy
- Clayton (Buddy) Hazell

SUBSCRIBE TODAY!



Subscribe Today!

CONTACT US!



Contact Us!

This Week's Poll

What is the most important issue facing lawmakers in Austin?

- Cutting the budget
- Redistricting
- Casino Gambling (legislators are considering this to raise money)
- Health care reform
- Funding for public schools/higher education
- Immigration

vote

Share

Like

Feeling the Cuts



State healthcare organization says proposed 33 percent reduction to Medicaid could threaten half the nursing homes in Texas

By Michael V. Hannigan

Budget cuts to schools proposed by state lawmakers have created headlines and drawn the ire of educators across the state, and now healthcare officials are saying the other end of the age spectrum will get hit just as hard.

The Texas Health Care Association (THCA) called planned cuts to Medicaid devastating to the state's nursing homes.

Facing a more than \$27 billion shortfall for 2012-2013, and determined to not touch the state's Rainy Day Fund or raise taxes, state lawmakers last month slashed \$30 billion or more from spending in their proposed budgets. Many of those cuts come in education and in health and human services.

THCA estimates the cuts to Medicaid-funding for nursing and rehab to reach 33 percent.

According to a THCA press release, the proposed cuts "would cause bankruptcies and facility closures, lead to widespread displacement of fragile nursing home residents, and send skilled frontline health care workers to unemployment lines in local communities across Texas."

"This is a long process, but the severity of the proposed Medicaid cuts warrants a strong initial reaction in terms of generating a needed debate about how these funding reductions will be hurtful to local lawmakers' seniors, and ruinous to local jobs and economic stability," said THCA President Tim Graves.

Graves said half of the state's 1,100 nursing homes could be in danger of closing.

Doug Humble III knows just how damaging those cuts could be for Henderson County. He is the director of operations for Cedar Lake Nursing Home in Malakoff and the president of the Henderson County Adult Protective Services Board.

"In my opinion, lawmakers are throwing out unrealistic proposals to prepare us for some sort of deep cuts," he said, "but any deep cuts will be devastating."

Humble said that Cedar Lake Nursing Home currently has 47 Medicaid patients; under the proposed budget, reimbursement would drop nearly \$38 per day, per resident.

"That would affect all aspects of daily living in our facility," he said. "We would be expected to perform up to the current standards of care with fewer nurses. It is a logistical nightmare that would realistically be impossible to perform."

The result, Humble said, could be reduced care and penalties from state surveyors.

"That could result in monetary fines on top of state cuts," he said. "It could spell the end of our 44-year-old, family-owned business. The ripple effect would have devastating results for our 84 residents and 105 state members and the local economy."

The Henderson County Adult Protective Services (APS) would also likely feel the ripples. APS, the lesser-known cousin to Child Protective Services (CPS), protects seniors and the disabled from abuse and exploitation.

If Medicaid patients are unable to get into nursing facilities, they will have to stay at home, increasing the chances for abuse straining an already overloaded APS system.



According to the agency, in the last decade the number of in-house abuse investigations by APS has doubled.

"The APS is already overworked," said Humble. "Adding to the workload could mean abuse will go unchallenged."

Reader Opinions

Duane Smith • pdsias@gmail.com

FEB 05 • Solution to the budget cuts problem - remove those on entitlement programs that clearly do not deserve and/or need them and divert these savings to those who can clearly demonstrate a legitimate need.

Another opportunity is to stop any form of direct cash payments to individuals and supply goods and services only.

Subsidy and entitlement programs are being openly abused and the evidence is often obvious.

[submit your opinion](#)



You are visitor: 1,511,407

© Copyright MediaOne LLC.. All rights reserved.

{ powered by [bulletlink.com](#) }