

Committee: Human Services
Re: Interim Charges 2.2-2.5, 4, 5 and other topics

Honorable James B. Frank and Committee Members,

The Texas Silver-Haired Legislature (TSHL) at the 2020 Legislative Session, held July 27 – 29, passed the attached resolution. It calls for the Texas Legislature to offer the citizens of Texas the chance to vote to expand Medicaid. This resolution was also voted by the TSHL membership as #7 of our top ten resolutions out of the 54 resolutions passed during our legislative session.

Texas has the highest uninsured rate at 17.3 percent and the highest number of uninsured persons in the country at 4.8 million, according to the Kaiser family foundation. Thousands of these uninsured are low income Texans age 60 – 65. Indeed, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities estimates 15,600 Texans age 55 - 64 have died prematurely between 2014 and 2019 because of the state's decision not to expand Medicaid.

Medicaid expansion would provide nearly 1.3 million Texans with access to healthcare; bring in roughly \$100 billion in federal funding to the state, and save local taxpayers \$4.3 billion dollars across Texas on uncompensated care. The influx of federal dollars and the tax savings will benefit Texas older adults, as programs for our older adults are experiencing budget cuts and, in some cases, elimination.

In the past few years 19 rural hospitals have closed in Texas, affecting our older adults living in these areas.

More than one million Texans without health insurance experienced mental illness or a substance abuse disorder. Again, this impacts Texas older adults, who may be living with, or caring for, these individuals. These are just some of the millions of Texans whose lives would change forever if we expand Medicaid in Texas."

To date, 36 states and the District of Columbia have expanded Medicaid. Just last year, voters in Idaho, Nebraska, and Utah voted to expand Medicaid in those states. States that have expanded Medicaid have seen a net budget savings.

Rep. John Bucy assisted the authors in writing this resolution, and, indeed, introduced legislation in the last session calling for a citizen vote on Medicaid expansion. To quote Rep Bucy:

"Expanding Medicaid is something we can do right now that would fundamentally transform the lives of our fellow Texans and their families," It's time to bring our tax dollars back to Texas, stop leaving billions of dollars in federal funding on the

table, and ensure every man, woman, and child is able to access the healthcare they need."

Whether one supports or opposes the expansion of Medicaid, this resolution simply calls for the Legislature to offer the citizens of Texas an opportunity to vote on the expansion of Medicaid to influence the issue of health and mortality rates of older Texans.

Respectfully submitted by:
Paul Stempko
Chair, Legislative Action Committee
Texas Silver-Haired Legislature



By: Paul Stempko, Linda Parrish, Ted Hubert,
Irene Andrews and Barbara Aydlett

No. R045

Committee: Health & Human Resources

**Offer the Citizens of Texas the Opportunity to Vote on the Expansion of
Medicaid**

A RESOLUTION TO: Offer Texans the opportunity to vote on the federal option to expand Medicaid in Texas.

WHEREAS, Texas remains one of only 14 U.S. States that has not chosen to expand Medicaid, allowing our portion of the federal Medicaid dollars (\$114.2 billion to date) to be given to the participating 36 states who have opted to expand Medicaid services; and

WHEREAS, Texas has the highest numbers of uninsured people (4.7 million) in the country, with 1.2 million more who could be covered if our state determined to expand Medicaid (Kaiser Foundation), and moreover, 15,600 Older Texans (ages 55-64) have died prematurely (2014-2019) because of our state's decision not to expand Medicaid (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Nov. 6, 2019); and,

WHEREAS, Texas has had 19 rural hospitals close since 2014, the first year of Medicaid expansion, due, in no small part, to the missed opportunity of uncompensated treatment that could have been funded by Medicaid Expansion, thus saving both rural hospitals, communities, and lives of older Texans, and Texas was given a D- grade and ranked 36th out of 47 states for mortality, quality of life and healthcare (Texas Tech Hall Institute for Rural and Community Health, and also given a D- by Rural Health Quarterly for the state's rural healthcare; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the 18th Texas Silver-Haired Legislature recommends that the 87th Texas Legislature passes legislation to offer the citizens of Texas the opportunity to vote on the expansion of Medicaid to influence the issue of health and mortality rates of older Texans.

PASSED AND APPROVED on April 30, 2020, by the Health & Human Resources committee.

Sue Wilson, Chair

PASSED AND APPROVED on July 28, 2020 , by the Texas Silver-Haired Legislature.

Rhonda Rogers, Speaker

ATTEST: , Secretary