

PRESS RELEASE

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New Interactive Tool and Report Show Economic Benefits that Expanded Health Care Access for Working Poor Would Bring to Texas, by County

Expanding health care coverage in Texas could create over 200,000 new jobs, reduce property tax pressure, and lower premiums for taxpayers and businesses

AUSTIN, TEXAS—Texans statewide stand to benefit economically and medically if the state legislature accepts federal health care funds to expand Medicaid -- or adopts a Texas alternative that expands coverage -- according to a [new interactive tool](#) and [new report](#) released today.

"[Health & Wealth County Checkup](#)," the new interactive tool from the [Center for Public Policy Priorities](#), displays the large number of Texans in each county who could gain health care coverage and benefit economically if Texas accepts federal health care funds or otherwise expands health care coverage in the state. Statewide over 1 million Texans who lack insurance and could gain coverage if Texas expanded Medicaid instead have no access to low-cost health coverage.

Significantly, the [Health & Wealth County Checkup](#) also shows new jobs, new local tax revenue, growth in personal income and other benefits stemming from health care expansion. In Harris County, for example, expanded health care could create more than 60,000 new jobs per year. The tool presents the most recent estimates from respected Texas and national experts, including the US Census, Kaiser Family Foundation, Texas Health and Human Services Commission, economist Dr. Ray Perryman, and former Texas Deputy Comptroller Billy Hamilton.

"Expanding health care coverage in Texas could create over 200,000 new jobs while reducing property tax pressure and lowering premiums for taxpayers and businesses," said Anne Dunkelberg, associate director of the Center for Public Policy Priorities. "Accepting federal health care funds to expand coverage means a healthier and wealthier Texas."

The accompanying report, titled "[Health Care, the 2013 Legislature, and the Affordable Care Act](#)," offers the first comprehensive reflection of how state-level decisions, actions, and omissions in health care intersect with the implementation of the Affordable Care Act in Texas. Methodist Healthcare Ministries of South Texas commissioned the report, which follows [the recent surge in Affordable Care Act enrollments in Texas](#) and offers a roadmap for the 2015 legislature to address health care in the state.

The report also highlights the significant 2013 state budget investment in behavioral health care, among other positive steps. It chronicles the challenges the lowest-income among the 6.4 million uninsured Texans will face because the legislature failed to accept federal health care funds to expand Medicaid.

Visit the Health & Wealth County Checkup online tool at <http://tools.forabettertexas.org/healthwealth/>

Download the Health Care, the 2013 Legislature, and the Affordable Care Act [report on our website](#).

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