

ADVOCACY ALERT



PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Dear Colleagues,

As we head into summer, I'm proud to share highlights from a remarkable season of advocacy and leadership within the Texas Chapter of the American College of Physicians Services (TXACPS). From Capitol Hill to the Texas State Capitol, our members have demonstrated what it means to lead with purpose and to speak up for our patients and profession.

"Our chapter was well represented, and our voices were heard on issues that matter to all of us."

This spring, TXACPS joined colleagues from across the country at ACP's National Advocacy Day in Washington, D.C., where we met directly with congressional offices to advocate for physician-led care, workforce support, and policies that protect access to high-quality internal medicine. Our chapter was well represented, and our voices were heard on issues that matter to all of us.

Back home, we organized a successful State Advocacy Day in Austin, uniting medical students, residents, and practicing physicians to present our 2025 legislative priorities to Texas lawmakers. This year's agenda included critical conversations around graduate medical education, scope of practice, Medicaid expansion, and public health preparedness. The relationships we continue to build at the state level will be essential as we approach the next legislative session.

In an exciting first, TXACPS supported a resident-led State Advocacy Day, giving our future leaders the platform to shape policy discussions and develop the advocacy skills that will sustain our profession for years to come. Their initiative, preparation, and professionalism were outstanding—and a powerful reminder of the potential within our training programs.

Continue Reading on Page 3...



IN THIS ISSUE

- Page 1 President's Address
- Page 3 ACP Leadership Day 2025
- Page 4 Texas ACP Services
Leadership Day
- Page 4 Residents-Led State
Advocacy Day Highlights
- Page 4 Lobbyist Report

ACP LEADERSHIP DAY 2025

April 28th & 29th

Texas ACP sent one of the largest delegations to ACP Leadership Day in DC this spring! For the second year running, every US chapter of ACP sent a delegation to participate.

The delegations spent the first day in educational and training sessions. The next day was spent at the Capitol, actively engaging with our legislators and advocating for our positions. Some of our own, including our most recent HPPC Committee Chair, Dr. Roxanne Tyroch, testified on the Senate floor!

Check out some pictures from the event!
We hope you'll join us next year.



With the Texas legislative session now concluded, this is the ideal time to build relationships with legislators and advocate for the issues that matter most to internal medicine. The interim provides a critical window to educate lawmakers, foster partnerships, and ensure our voices are well-positioned before the next session begins.

Looking ahead, we're preparing for our Fall Annual Meeting, which will offer a full slate of engaging and high-yield educational sessions—though we will not have a legislative track this year. In the meantime, the Health and Public Policy Committee is beginning its strategic planning for the 2027 legislative session, including a refreshed member survey and a call for new advocates to get involved as we build momentum for future advocacy efforts.

Whether you're new to advocacy or a longtime participant, now is the time to get involved. The strength of our chapter lies in its people—and your voice has never been more important.



Drew Payne, DO FACP
President, Texas Chapter of the American College of Physicians Services

TEXAS ACP SERVICES LEADERSHIP DAY

March 20th, 2025

This year, we relaunched our State Advocacy Day in Austin! After some bad weather forced a reschedule, we still had a good showing of Texas ACP medical students, residents, and practicing physicians. This year's agenda included critical conversations around graduate medical education, scope of practice, Medicaid expansion, and public health preparedness. Our delegation met with 23 legislators and staff to advocate for our positions. Thank you to all who attended, and we look forward to holding another in 2027!



RESIDENT-LED STATE ADVOCACY DAY HIGHLIGHTS

May 12th, 2025

TXACPS was proud to support a resident-led State Advocacy Day this year, highlighting the vital role of internal medicine physicians in shaping healthcare policy. Residents from across Texas came together to engage with legislators, share their perspectives from the frontlines of patient care, and advocate for issues impacting their profession and their patients.

Participants included:

- UTSW: Alex Gajewski, Ron Bass, Yadonay Engeda, Jameson Wilbur
- Dell: Suju Ojha, Carolina Najera
- UT RG: Renzo Allerros



LOBBYIST REPORT

I've been thinking about how to describe the personality of the 89th Texas Legislature for several weeks. Going into Session, not knowing who be elected Speaker, committee chairs, committee members, with an above average number of Freshman who have now caught the car and must learn to legislate – I was thinking trainwreck. Often this creative tension and drama is described as good for Texas Monthly magazine bad for Texans.

Speaking of Texas Monthly, since 1973, legislative observers over at the Texas Chili Parlor (say a prayer for Parlor's owner – Zoob – who passed away a week after the Session adjourned Sine Die) often pronounce themselves as wise sages by predicting the list of Texas Monthly's best and worst legislators. Posted recently: [Best and Worst Legislators: The Nine Lawmakers \(and One Lobbyist\) Who Tell the Story of the Session.](#)

Continue Reading on Page 5...

As the Session went on, it became clearer that adults were in charge of things on the House side. The Speaker did a great job hiring staff and advisors, he made good committee appointments and remarkably he did a successfully balanced power between old-line conservative business Republicans, the social conservatives and putting the populist Republicans in a position to have skin in the game and be productive should they take the outstretched hand. He also, was able to work with enough Democrats by providing responsible committee assignments and the Vice-chairmanships on each committee. Don't get me wrong, there were days at the end of the Session where many votes came down to partisan lines.

The Senate remains Lt Governor Dan Patrick's domain. And for the most part, he got his priorities passed.

The Governor, on the staff level, provided guidance to the legislature. He was however, intimately involved in his number 1 2 and 3 priority – Education Saving Accounts/Vouchers. The Governor will greatly increase his demonstrable use of power by issuing veto's. After the veto period (June 22), many observers anticipate the Governor to call a Special Session and anticipate that THC regulation, bond reform, human trafficking and possibly mid-decade congressional redistricting.

"The Democrats can return home to say they improved women's access to reproductive health, staved off wholesale cuts to education, Medicaid..."

In the end with the synergies between the Governor, Senate and House yielded a solid conservative session that Republicans can go back home and claim success. The Democrats can return home to say they improved women's access to reproductive health, staved off wholesale cuts to education, Medicaid and draw a bright distinction to gin up their grassroots to get back out on the campaign after last year's national shellacking.

So, what is the personality of this Session? It was better than many observers predicted 6 months ago. Like usual we fought for 140 days, some days we kicked the bear in the teeth and other days the bear mauled our backside. I'm leaning towards competent and workmanlike.

Some Data Points

TxACPS tracked 300+ bills in 15 Senate and House Committees. We took positions on 87 bills and fought until the last weekend to pass and kill bills.

TX ACPS Position's and Status	Bills
Supported and Passed	22
Supported and Died	34
Opposed and Passed	4
Opposed and Died	10
Monitor and Passed	7
Monitor and Died	10

Overall, The Texas Legislature passed 1,208 bills this session.

- The Senate and House filed 8,719 (highest since 1991 last date available).
- That's a passage rate of 13.8% (lowest since '91).
- Besides 2023 (15.5% passage rate) the rate is usually around 20% on average.

That's a 31% drop in passed bills as a % of total filed from the norm this session.

TXACPS Legislative Priorities

Protecting the Patient-Physician Relationship: Oppose unwarranted expansion by non-physicians, particularly advanced nurse practitioners, pharmacists regarding diagnosing, treating and prescribing, independent practice with little physician oversight.

- Advanced Nurse Practitioners, Pharmacists, Physical Therapists and Podiatrists all had hearings on their bills to expand their scope.
- **SB 268** would have prohibited a licensing entity from taking disciplinary action based on a complaint against a health care practitioner licensed by a different entity unless that entity referred the complaint back to the entity that received the complaint for investigation. Through grassroots efforts by Organized Medicine, Governor Abbott vetoed this bill on the last of the Veto Period.

Valuing the Care Provided by Internal Medicine

Physicians: Protect patients' access to care by ensuring fair and appropriate physician compensation, including annual inflationary adjustments, and policies supporting physicians' transition from fee-for-service to value-based models of care.

- **HB 2254** allows Primary Care physicians to enter into value-based care contracts.

Workforce: Increase investments in state programs that support and expand the primary care physician workforce, such as protecting the General Internal Medicine Statewide Preceptorship Program, funding for Graduate Medical Education (GME) and loan deferment initiatives.

- Big win on Preceptorship. We maintained our funding from last biennium.
- GME \$ for new residency slots continues to grow and keep pace with 1.1 slots to 1 Texas Medical School graduates.

Ensuring Access to Care: Support policies that protect and enhance Medicaid, preserve access to telehealth services, improve the integration of behavioral health in primary care, and increase access to care in rural areas. Assure preservation of Texas' tort damage limits and other defense-related provisions.

- Protect Medicaid funding and program.
- Freshman Republican bill to index caps to GDP received no hearing. Tort protected.

Reproductive Health: Work with other aligned advocates to provide safe harbors for physicians from criminal prosecution and restore clinical-legal exceptions to total ban.

- **SB 31** would revise various statutes relating to exceptions to the prohibition of abortions based on a physician's exercise of reasonable medical judgment in certain circumstances. The bill would establish related provisions on medical treatment and medical liability and would provide for legal and medical continuing education requirements related to abortion regulations and pregnancy-related medical emergencies.

Insurance oversight of Health Plans: Identifying and closing loopholes or misapplied provisions in Prior authorization laws; refine out of network standards.

- **HB 3812 by Bonnen**. Passed. Gold Card Prior authorization update.
- **HB 138 by Dean**. Passed. Providing impact analyses of legislation on private insurance coverage.
- HB139 by Dean. Died. Plans would have been able to sell state mandate free policies to employers.

Public Health: vaccines, infrastructure, communicable disease, nicotine, opioids.

- It was not a good session for pro-immunization advocates. **HB 4535 by McQueeney**. Would require a health care provider, before administering a COVID-19

vaccination, to obtain an individual's written informed consent. Authorize the appropriate licensing authority to impose disciplinary action on a health care provider who administered a COVID-19 vaccination in violation of the bill.

- **SB 25 by Kolkhorst**. Establishes a statewide nutrition advisory committee, manufacturer warning label requirements for food products with certain ingredients, nutrition curriculum and physical education requirements for public schools and higher education institutions, and nutrition and metabolic health continuing education requirements for certain health professionals.

Health Care Cost Initiatives: Trim unnecessary/preventable costs; improve productivity; funding the State's All Claims Payor Claims Data Base (ACPD), assuring robust physician applications; enhanced hospital charge transparency; prescription drugs and PBM mark-ups; etc.

- \$8 million to Fund the APCD

Supporting and Enhancing Health Information

Technology: Support policies that will help leverage technology, including augmented intelligence, to improve patient care and reduce administrative and practice burdens on physicians. Promote policies to ensure technology is used in appropriate ways to enhance patient care, and not to discriminate or inappropriately restrict patient access to care.

- **HB 997 killed in Committee**. Would have allowed non Texas licensed physicians to practice medicine via telemedicine.
- **SB 815** by Schwertner amends the Insurance Code to prohibit a utilization review agent from using an automated decision system to make an adverse determination wholly or partly. The insurance commissioner would be authorized to conduct an audit or inspection any time a utilization review agent used an automated decision system for utilization review.
- Several other AI health bills fell by the wayside during the legislative session.

Preventing Firearms-Related Injuries and Deaths: Reduce firearms-related injuries and deaths through investments in research and much needed evidence-based policy reforms at all levels of government.

- Predictably, no firearm safety bill was set for hearing this session.