

April 20, 2020

Dear Governor Abbott,

As your partners in government, we implore you to exercise your executive authority to immediately increase access to healthcare: expand Medicaid. We all know the high number of persons lacking health insurance affects the insured as well as the uninsured – burdening our healthcare system, driving up costs for businesses and families, lowering productivity, and more. We all are also acutely aware of the need to confront the economic and health challenges of COVID-19. Immediately expanding Medicaid offers powerful resources to address these urgent problems.

The benefits are evident in the 36 states that have already expanded Medicaid: state and local tax revenues rise while the state budget realizes a net gain; overall physical and mental health improves; families become financially more stable; persons become more self-sufficient; hospitals in rural communities, where uninsured rates range up to 36 percent, stay open; businesses become more productive and the economy grows due to more efficient deployment of state resources and massive federal investment (\$9 for each \$1 the state invests). The benefits for Texas will be even greater.

The question is not *whether* we should expand Medicaid but, rather, *how*. We have no time to waste and much work to do. We must consider the following:

- Working with CMS, which elements can we use to arrive at a unique Texas solution?
- What non-Medicaid mechanisms can we improve in conjunction with expansion?
- By addressing social determinants of health, can we strengthen the broader healthcare system while also lowering costs both inside and outside of Medicaid?
- Can we increase incentives for participation by primary care providers?

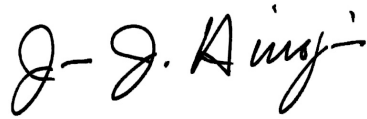
Republican-led and Democratic-led states are operating a variety of successful models from which we can draw lessons. Ultimately, getting it right will require the sincere efforts of each of us, without regard to partisan fealty or who gets credit. As Governor, you have the power to break the political inertia that presently blocks successful implementation.

We stand ready to work with you and our Republican colleagues to improve the health and well-being of all Texans, to boost the Texas economy, and to combat this deadly pandemic.

Sincerely,



Carol Alvarado
Senate District 6



Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa
Senate District 20



Nathan Johnson
Senate District 16



Eddie Lucio, Jr.
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José Menéndez
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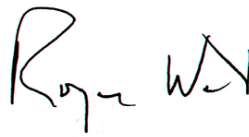
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