

## **RESOLUTION Regarding Uninsured and Indigent Access to Healthcare**

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#### **Regarding Uninsured and Indigent Access to Healthcare**

**Whereas the United Board of Health is the policy-making body for public health in Galveston County & Cities, and the 4C's Governing Board is the policy-making body for primary healthcare services provided in two local federally-qualified clinics; and**

**Whereas two essential public health functions defined in Texas Statute are to (1) link individuals who have a need for community and personal health services to appropriate community and private providers and (2) evaluate the effectiveness, accessibility and quality of personal and population-based health services in a community; and**

**Whereas an estimated 28% (~79,516) of Galveston County and City residents are uninsured and approximately 75,991 residents have incomes that are less than 200% of the federal poverty level (e.g., an income less than \$42,400 for a family of four); and**

**Whereas, until recently, the community of Galveston County and Cities has historically provided access to healthcare for its uninsured and indigent residents; and**

**Whereas recently UTMB has diminished capacity to treat a variety of conditions and trauma, as well as a loss of access to primary, specialty and hospital care for the indigent and uninsured; and**

**Whereas Galveston County has two federally-qualified clinics which provide primary care services to over 17,000 uninsured residents annually who no longer have access to specialty and hospital care in the county and approximately 220 residents who qualify for the county indigent healthcare program (at 21% federal poverty level) whose access to specialty and hospital care has been disrupted; and**

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**As such, many uninsured have no future option for such care, and many who formerly obtained care at UTMB have lost continuity of care for their existing conditions. The diseases and conditions of residents, without healthcare access, will result in disease progression to the point of health emergencies and ultimately preventable losses of life and related social and economic impacts; and**

**Whereas access to healthcare improves the quality of life and economic well-being of communities and is associated with improved health outcomes and decreases in morbidity and mortality, improved educational potential, decreases in high school drop-out rates, increased participation in labor workforce, optimized tax revenues, less costly hospital, emergency and uncompensated care, and a decrease burden on public programs such as income support payments; therefore**

**Be it resolved that the United Board of Health and 4C's Governing Board (Boards) jointly support a prompt and collaborative plan to address the impending healthcare crisis in Galveston County and Cities, by exploring all available avenues for financing uninsured healthcare, including taxing solutions and special districts, with a focus on sustaining and enhancing the quality of life and the economy for all residents of Galveston County & Cities.**

**Be it further resolved that the Boards support a plan which will include: feasible tax solutions with legitimate caps and strategies to minimize tax rates; available supplemental grants and other sources of supplemental state and federal funds; committed donations from charitable organizations, foundations, etc; multi-governmental and/or regional approaches; a structure which allows participation by all interested public, private and other health-related entities; investments in preventive care and chronic disease management; and extensive community support.**