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## **Children's hospitals seek \$100 million to cope with funding crisis**

AUSTIN, Texas — Children's hospitals across Texas—facing critical funding shortages over Medicaid losses—want the Texas Legislature to add \$100 million to the two-year state budget to fill in the gaps. The [Children's Hospital Association of Texas \(CHAT\)](#) has asked state officials to include \$50 million per year for nonprofit children's hospitals statewide that depend on Medicaid to serve these young patients.

"Our hospitals serve the sickest kids from all over Texas, and about half of Texas children rely on Medicaid for health care," Stacy Wilson, president of the Children's Hospital Association of Texas, said. "If the state's children's hospitals do not receive the \$100 million, they'll be forced to make decisions that could impact whether life-saving treatment is available for children who have complex medical conditions like cancer, who need complex surgery for heart or spine issues, or who are born prematurely."

The CHAT non-profit hospitals, which are located strategically around the state, treat the most vulnerable and medically complex children, serving as the safety net for both urban and rural hospitals. Kids who are too sick to be treated at these other hospitals are often transferred to a children's hospital. Over 40 percent of this care is for the most severe conditions a child can face care that often requires a team of pediatric specialists, which children's hospitals can provide.

"Kids are not just small adults. Many of our patients come from other general hospitals that do not have the same level of pediatric training, expertise, and experience or state-of-the-art equipment designed for children as CHAT hospitals," Wilson said. "Children get better care and better outcomes when they're treated by pediatric experts."

A survey of Texas voters finds strong support for such legislative funding, with 85 percent of respondents agreeing that Medicaid is an important health care program and 74 percent saying they're in favor of the additional \$100 million for children's hospitals. Additionally, the survey, conducted by Baseline & Associates, Inc. found that quality children's hospitals are a key factor employers consider when relocating headquarters and jobs to the state.

"The majority of Texans—from urban, suburban and rural areas and across all political parties—agree that ensuring funding of our children's hospitals and health care is not only a

priority but is also a way to keep Texas strong and competitive in terms of jobs and the economy,” Mike Basalice, the survey company’s president and chief executive officer, said.

About 3.4 million—one-half of all children living in Texas—are enrolled in Medicaid or the Children’s Health Insurance Program. Children under age 18 make up 75 percent of all Medicaid cases in Texas. Children’s hospitals depend on Medicaid funding. More than half to three-quarters of the time kids spend at a children’s hospital in Texas is paid by Medicaid.

“The \$100 million for children’s hospitals will help mitigate Medicaid losses and keep doors open at children’s hospitals in Texas until there’s a long-term funding solution,” Wilson said.

“The future of Texas depends on having a thriving and well-educated population, and a fundamental building block for that goal is keeping the population healthy today,” she said. “No matter who you are, where you come from, what language you speak or whether you can afford it, a children’s hospital is here to take care of the complex medical needs of Texas kids.”

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### **About the Children’s Hospital Association of Texas**

The mission of the Children’s Hospital Association of Texas (CHAT) is to advance children’s health and well-being by advocating for policies and funding that promote children’s access to high-quality, comprehensive health care. Since 1989, CHAT has worked to advance its goals and public policy objectives in cooperation with other trade associations, advocacy groups, state agencies and the Texas Legislature. [www.chatexas.com](http://www.chatexas.com)