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## **Children's Hospital Association of Texas Awards Senator Joan Huffman with Children's Health Care Hero Award**

Austin, TX – The Children's Hospital Association of Texas (CHAT) honored Senator Joan Huffman with the Children's Health Care Hero Award for her outstanding contributions and support of children's healthcare initiatives during the 87th Legislative Session.

Sen. Huffman served as the senate sponsor of House Bill 1616, which creates a voluntary, expedited pathway to licensure for qualified physicians who wish to practice in multiple states through the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact. The bill also ensures that physicians remain subject to the laws and regulations of each state in which the physician delivers care. The bill was created in response to the COVID-19 pandemic's dramatic increase in the use and acceptance of telemedicine by both health care providers and patients. The award was presented to Sen. Huffman on Thursday, Nov. 18 at Texas Children's Hospital in Houston.

"We are grateful to Sen. Huffman for her dedication to ensuring that all Texans, including our children, have access to high-quality health care like the care that our comprehensive children's hospitals provide," Stacy Wilson, president of CHAT, said. "CHAT is proud to honor Sen. Huffman with this award for her leadership in supporting children, and we look forward to our continued work with the senator to ensure the best health outcomes for all kids in Texas."

Healthcare costs and lack of access to care can often drive families beyond their breaking point, and telemedicine serves as a necessary option for families who live hundreds of miles away from hospitals. The Children's Health Care Hero Award

recognizes Texas leaders who have demonstrated a commitment to an accessible, high-quality and appropriately funded children's healthcare system in Texas.

"It is an honor to be recognized as a Children's Health Care Hero by the Children's Hospital Association of Texas," Sen. Huffman said. "While I am thankful for the recognition of my work to improve children's healthcare in Texas, I think the real healthcare heroes are the doctors, nurses, and staff that have diligently served their patients throughout the pandemic. Therefore, I would like to share this award with all of our healthcare heroes and thank *them* for their efforts to keep Texans healthy."

Prior to receiving the award, Sen. Huffman toured Texas Children's Hospital in the Texas Medical Center with Dr. Lara Shekerdemian, Division Chief of Critical Care, Texas Children's Hospital and Shannon Zerber, Assistant Vice President of Nursing, Texas Children's Hospital. Sen. Huffman was able to visit the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit.

"It is a privilege to show Sen. Huffman the state-of-the art facilities and specialized care we are able to provide for thousands of children in her district and across the state," Dr. Catherine Gordon said, Pediatrician-in-Chief at Texas Children's Hospital. "We are grateful for her commitment to accessible healthcare for the children of Texas and are fortunate to have her support the world-renowned work we provide to kids in Texas."

Huffman represents District 17 which is located in Southeast Texas and includes portions of Brazoria, Fort Bend, and Harris counties.

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

The Children's Hospital Association of Texas (CHAT) is a non-profit association whose mission 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. Learn more about CHAT at [chatexas.com](http://chatexas.com) or follow CHAT on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/ChildHospAssnTX>.