

RHAT continues to monitor Telehealth rules and regulations

RHAT supports any legislation that will increase access to healthcare and services of providers through the use of telehealth. RHAT believes telehealth will be an important tool for, and is vital for, access to rural health.

RHAT continues to monitor legislation for tobacco and vapor products

RHAT has consistently been on record against use of tobacco.

Tennessee exceeds the average national smoking rate. Smoking leads to so many chronic health problems.

While there is not yet enough scientific evidence as to the negative or positive benefits of Vapors, RHAT has concerns about its use, as Vapors contain nicotine, an extremely addictive and harmful ingredient.

Source: <https://news.tn.gov/node/13328>

RHAT opposes any legislation that diverts state funds to be used for highway improvements.

RHAT will continue to monitor and oppose the use of sales tax funds where to do so would negatively impact availability of funds for programs which support access to rural healthcare.

Other statements of support:

RHAT supports strong community health centers, rural health clinics and other safety net providers.

RHAT supports strong workforce development programs for rural areas.

RHAT supports ongoing legislation that improves access to behavioral health care services.

Values:

- Promote equitable access to appropriate and comprehensive health services for rural Tennesseans.
- Maintain a diverse membership that represents all Tennesseans.
- Empower members to assist the community in identifying and resolving their own unique health care needs through grassroots efforts.
- Recognize the benefits of collaborating with other agencies and organizations in order to positively impact health outcomes.

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2017 Legislative Principles and Priorities

Pregnancy Obesity Funding Illness Impacts

New Administration Rural Laws

Cost Education Health Care Insurance

Public Health Abuse Communities

Tennessee Reimbursement School

Programs Mental Health Telehealth

RHAT supports Coordinated School Health (CSH)

CSH provides access to healthcare in rural and metro communities. CSH also helps to bring additional dollars to counties through partnerships and grant opportunities. RHAT thanks our legislators for their continued support of CSH across Tennessee.

Mission: To Improve the health of rural Tennesseans through advocacy, communication, education, and legislation.

RHAT opposes any bill to weaken the requirement for physical activity in the schools

RHAT continues to support the requirement for physical activity. This requirement is one of the eight components of the Coordinated School Health initiative and provides for planned individual and cooperative physical activities and fitness assessments for each student.

RHAT opposes any weakening of motorcycle helmet laws

Eight percent of motorcycle riders involved in crashes are either injured or killed (NCSL Transportation Review, 2012). In TN, the average crash rate for 2015 is 8.615 with 3015 reported crashes and a 4% fatality rate. (TN-FARS)

A national study researched six years of information in the National Trauma Data Bank on motorcycle crashes. The conclusion was un-helmeted motorcycle crash patients suffer more severe brain injuries, consume more resources, and have the worst insurance payor mix. Society bears a large financial burden for these uninsured un-helmeted patients. There is a survival advantage for helmeted patients. (Annals of Surgery, 2009)

Studies indicate that the risk of brain injury in hospitalized motorcyclists is nearly twice that for un-helmeted motorcyclists and that un-helmeted drivers had acute care costs three times (\$30,365) that of helmeted drivers.

RHAT supports SB0214/HB0647 Annual Coverage Assessment Act of 2017

RHAT appreciates the past support of legislators of the “Hospital Assessment Act” and asks your continued support in 2017—2018 Tennessee’s hospitals have helped the state and TennCare avoid more than \$1 billion in service cuts and reimbursement reductions over the past four years.

The assessment is vital to the continuation of comprehensive care to TennCare enrollees and in preserving payments to providers for many services.

Hospitals provide \$450 million to fund TennCare through the hospital assessment and another almost \$200 million in certified public expenditures.

Source: www.tha.com

RHAT supports legislation for increased access to broadband services in rural communities

RHAT supports broadband expansion that will provide access at Mbps levels which would allow access to telehealth capabilities in rural communities. RHAT supports priority to be given to rural communities where acceptable levels of broadband has not been made available in the past.

RHAT continues to oppose any TennCare cuts to safety net providers and hospitals

A reduction could place a greater financial burden on hospitals and providers that would be unsustainable. Hospitals are prepared to use monies from hospital assessment trust fund reserves.

Tennessee’s hospitals employ over 97,000 people and cannot afford to take further cuts to TennCare reimbursement.

RHAT is also monitoring the following healthcare legislation:

- **SB1045/HB1410 Telecommunication services, including broadband by municipal electrics and electrical cooperatives**
- **SB1041/HB1207 Bill to identify top 20% opioid prescribers**
- **SB1276/HB1272 Mobile Integrated Healthcare**
- **SB0150/HB0292 Nurse Practitioner and Physician Assistants to treat minors with STDs to the full extent of person’s authority**
- **SB0704/HB0879 Ground Ambulance Service Provider Assessment Act**