



SENATOR CHARLES SCHWERTNER, MD
SENATE DISTRICT 5

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Tom Holloway

December 1, 2014

(512) 923-5944

**Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Releases Interim Report to 84th Texas Legislature**

AUSTIN, TX -- Today, the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services released its Interim Report to the 84th Texas Legislature. The 58-page report outlines a number of legislative recommendations aimed at addressing some of the state's most significant healthcare challenges, including expanding access to women's healthcare, improving the state's mental health services, stopping prescription drug abuse, and finding affordable care options for our state's uninsured population.

"This report provides a blueprint for tackling some of our state's most pressing healthcare issues," said Senator Charles Schwertner, MD (R-Georgetown), who chairs the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services. "Since taking over as Chairman in July, it's been an honor to work alongside my fellow Senators and help Texas move toward the kind of healthcare system that's affordable for consumers, accessible for families, and accountable to taxpayers."

In preparing this report, the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services spent several months gathering research, conducting public hearings, and soliciting advice from dozens of experts in the field of healthcare. All six Republican members and all three Democratic members of the committee signed the report prior to its release this afternoon.

"While the members of this committee may approach the issues of healthcare from different political backgrounds or ideological perspectives, in the end, we all want what's best for the people of Texas. That's why I'm proud we were able to reach common ground on many of the issues outlined in this report."

The report includes legislative recommendations on a number of items laid out by Lt. Governor David Dewhurst at the beginning of the year, including:

- 1) reviewing the Department of Family and Protective Services' efforts to reduce child fatalities;
- 2) monitoring the implementation of programs that were created to improve mental health and substance abuse services;
- 3) examining women's access to preventative health care;

- 4) identifying cost-effective alternatives to Medicaid;
- 5) assessing the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program structure;
- 6) evaluating the current strategies for reducing prescription drug abuse in Texas;
- 7) monitoring the implementation of legislation addressed by the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services last session, including reforms to the State Board of Dental Examiners and the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT).

In addition, Senator Schwertner announced the pre-filing of three bills intended to address several issues identified in the Health and Human Services Committee's Interim Report to the 84th Texas Legislature (attached):

- SB 195 (Schwertner) - relating to information relating to prescriptions for certain controlled substances.
- SB 196 (Schwertner) - relating to controlled substance registration by physician assistants and advance practice nurses.
- SB 197 (Schwertner) - relating to the financial self-sufficiency of the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT).

Last month, Dr. Charles Schwertner was overwhelmingly reelected to serve the citizens of Senate District 5, a ten-county region of central and east Texas. Following the 83rd Legislative Session, Senator Schwertner was named a "Courageous Conservative" by the Texas Conservative Coalition, a "Lone Star Conservative Leader" by the Texas Conservative Roundtable, and "Senate Freshman of the Year" by Texas Monthly magazine.

###