



TEXAS ACADEMY *of* FAMILY PHYSICIANS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Rep. Edwards Increases Access to Primary Care Across Texas

The Texas Academy of Family Physicians applauds Rep. Al Edwards and his efforts to bring primary care physicians to underserved communities across Texas. With his bill, House Bill 2154, Rep. Edwards demonstrates his commitment to the health and well-being of all Texans.

“We’ve had no better advocate than Rep. Al Edwards,” said Robert Youens, MD, president of the Texas Academy of Family Physicians. “He knows that the best way to make sure Texans in underserved, urban neighborhoods and rural communities alike have access to the care they need is to bring more primary care physicians to those areas.”

Studies show that having more primary care physicians in a community leads to a decrease in the number of costly hospital admissions and emergency room visits, and patients receive better health outcomes at lower costs.

But Texas faces a severe shortage of primary care physicians. More than half of Texas’ counties need more primary care physicians, and the problem is only getting worse.

Chief among the multiple factors contributing to Texas’ shrinking supply of primary care physicians is the cost of medical school. Faced with such high medical school debt, many doctors forego practice in underserved areas, like inner city Houston.

H.B. 2154 would provide up to \$160,000 in debt relief for primary care physicians who agree to practice for up to four years in health professional shortage areas.

“Rep. Edwards has a keen understanding of the health care crisis facing not just his constituents in urban Harris County, but all of Texas,” said TAFP CEO Tom Banning. “House Bill 2154 creates a new, substantial loan repayment program to relieve medical students from the crushing debt they incur in medical school, producing the kinds of physicians Texas needs to ensure patients receive the right care at the right time in the right setting.”

Family physicians and their patients appreciate Rep. Edwards’ consistent dedication to solving health care issues facing Texas. TAFP looks forward to working with Rep. Edwards to ensure that all Texans have access to primary care.

As Texas’ largest medical specialty organization, TAFP promotes and assures the maintenance of high-quality health care. It provides its members with a unified voice for family medicine and continues to be one of the most patient-oriented public health groups in Texas.