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Press Release

Small Business Healthcare Program Grants Awarded

The Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) has awarded grants totaling \$1 million to two coalitions to develop healthcare programs for employees of small business.

Houston, Texas, March 25, 2008: In Houston/Harris County, the funding will support the Harris County Healthcare Alliance's efforts in combating the uninsured by launching the Three-Share product in early 2009. Local safety net healthcare providers (e.g. hospitals and community health centers) are anticipated to benefit under the Three-Share program by the resulting increase in patients who have a payer source for their care.

The Three-Share program will encourage the utilization of medical homes by enrollees, thereby improving their utilization of preventive and primary care services, resulting over time in less use of high-cost services in emergency rooms and acute hospitals. *"I congratulate the Harris County Health Care Alliance for continuing to lead the fight to help small businesses find affordable health coverage for their hard-working employees," said Harris County Judge Ed Emmett. "Every step we take to provide more Texans with health coverage enables us to better protect ourselves and our neighbors."*

In addition to improved health of the employees and their families, Three-Share coverage will translate to reducing the demand for state-funded programs such as Medicaid; encouraging economic development through a healthier and more productive workforce; and laying the groundwork for innovative solutions that can be replicated statewide.

The Harris County Healthcare Alliance in Houston has been named Fiduciary Agent for distribution of the award among the communities in the Texas Communities Healthcare Coalition. Coalition members applied together for the funding on behalf of their communities in order to achieve efficiency with regard to administrative costs and encourage shared learning, while still allowing flexibility and local control in how individual programs are designed and implemented.

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