



# Texas Health and Human Services

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## NEWS RELEASE

ALBERT HAWKINS  
EXECUTIVE COMMISSIONER

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**Contact:** Stephanie Goodman, 512-424-6951

### **HHSC Awards Grants to Develop Local Health-Care Programs**

*Grants Go to Programs in Brazos Valley, Central Texas, Galveston, Houston, Dallas, El Paso*

AUSTIN — The Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) has awarded grants totaling \$1 million to two coalitions to develop health-care programs for employees of small businesses.

"We want to create a culture of insurance in our state and support innovative local programs working to reduce the number of uninsured Texans," said Texas Health and Human Services Executive Commissioner Albert Hawkins.

The grants were authorized by Senate Bill 10 during the last legislative session to support the development of local multi-share programs where the cost of health-care coverage is split among the employer, the employee and another source, such as a foundation or public entity. The grants include:

- \$700,000 for the Texas Communities Healthcare Coalition to develop multi-share programs in five areas. The coalition plans to implement programs in 2008 in Galveston and the Central Texas area, which includes Travis, Hays, Williamson, Burnet, Caldwell and Bastrop counties. In 2009, the coalition will develop programs in Houston, Dallas and El Paso. The coalition estimates it will enroll 45,000 people in its multi-share programs.
- \$300,000 for the Brazos Valley Council of Governments to implement a multi-share program that serves Brazos, Burleson, Grimes, Leon, Madison, Robertson and Washington counties. Brazos Valley plans to enroll 5,000 people in its program.

Surveys show that two-thirds of uninsured adults in Texas work, but many are employed by businesses that don't offer insurance or the cost is too much for low-income employees.

People who have health insurance are more likely to get preventive care and see a doctor for problems early, when the cost for treatment is cheaper. The uninsured tend to forgo medical care until the problem worsens and treatment costs – which are ultimately borne by taxpayers and those with private coverage – are highest.

"Creating affordable insurance options for employees of small businesses helps strengthen existing employer-sponsored plans and private coverage in Texas," Hawkins said. "That, in turn, helps curb increasing costs for all Texans with health insurance."

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