Why Texas Medicine Needs TEXPAC

It’s that time. We are in the midst of the 140 days every other year in Texas when politicians make speeches, lobbyists lobby, legislators pass laws, and organized medicine works hard to forge government changes that will help physicians and their patients.

Fortunately for medicine, TEXPAC was working hard long before the 140-day state legislative session began. TEXPAC paved the way for TMA’s lobby team and physician-advocates to rise above the commotion at the state Capitol with a sturdy voice and strong personal relationships in the House and Senate.

TEXPAC and TMA work hand in hand to achieve medicine’s goals at the local, state, and federal level. Each has an important role.

What Is the Difference Between TEXPAC and TMA?
In the government relations arena, TMA focuses on policy. TEXPAC is all about electing the right candidates, and educating candidates and elected officials about Texas medicine so they can make informed decisions. In addition, TEXPAC makes monetary contributions to election campaigns, whereas TMA does not. That is why your TMA membership does not automatically make you a member of TEXPAC.

TEXPAC is a voluntary, nonpartisan political arm of TMA, but it is a separate entity that has to follow strict rules governing political action committees. TEXPAC works to advance TMA’s mission of improving the health of all Texans and enables TMA members to protect Texas patients through political education and activism.

TEXPAC operates under the motto, “United in protecting our patients.” TEXPAC’s 7,000 members advocate on behalf of TMA’s 48,000-and-counting Texas physicians and medical student members, and nearly 8,000 TMA Alliance members. TEXPAC is one of the largest nonpartisan PACs in the state and ranks first in size among other state medical association PACs.

TEXPAC is dues-funded. Where does the money go?
On the campaign trail, it goes to:
- Direct contributions to a TEXPAC-endorsed candidate’s campaign;
- In-kind support to candidates through mailers, push cards, and other promotional items;
- Polling to help better understand the dynamics of key races; and
- Assistance for physicians hosting events and fundraisers for their elected officials or candidates.

TEXPAC wants physicians to get involved in their local races and state races. Even when TEXPAC physicians want to support a candidate TEXPAC did not endorse, TEXPAC offers promotional support.

But TEXPAC does much more than that.
- **TEXPAC provides you access to elected officials.** Before the legislative session and lobbying begin, TEXPAC staff and leadership put TMA members in front of their elected officials and friends of medicine running for office. Using research, facts, and local physicians’ input, TEXPAC uses a principled approach—not politics—to choose medicine’s friends and convey medicine’s messages.
- **TEXPAC gives you a voice.** Local physicians’ input counts a lot. Organized phone banks and block walks take medicine’s message to voters. TEXPAC membership gives physicians a voice at the crowded table of politics—and ensures elected officials are held accountable.
- **TEXPAC offers you a way to take the lead.** TEXPAC gives physicians leadership opportunities to become involved in and knowledgeable about major political issues involving health care.

How Does TEXPAC Endorse Candidates?
TEXPAC’s diverse board of physician leaders represents different geographical areas, practice types, and political philosophies. The board makes endorsement decisions by democratic vote to represent TEXPAC’s varied political membership. TEXPAC endorses candidates based on their public record of standing up for medicine’s issues, and a combination of subjective and objective scores, not by their party. With 59 Republicans and 55 Democrats endorsed in the Texas House during the 2014 election, it is clear the approach is not party-driven. TEXPAC does not endorse candidates simply because they are incumbents. The candidate must have a proven record of supporting medicine.

TEXPAC leaders encourage county medical societies to interview ALL local candidates running for office, then give TEXPAC their recommendation for endorsement. TEXPAC also encourages county societies to conduct letter-writing campaigns to the TEXPAC board in which physicians explain why they support the candidate they believe is the most qualified. These letters are invaluable to TEXPAC and help the board make the right endorsements.

What about candidates and officials who do not support TMA’s legislative agenda? TEXPAC encourages local physicians to meet with
Why Texas Medicine Needs TEXPAC
(Continued)

them and use their poor voting record as an opportunity to educate them on issues important to the doctors and patients they represent.

Your Voice Is Important, Too!
TEXPAC knows physicians have a voice; but unified, your voice is amplified and powerful. TEXPAC’s tools put you in the room with your legislators, where it counts most. While TMA has a robust representation of physicians who embody medicine as a whole in Texas, TEXPAC’s passionate members go the extra mile to make sure their practices are not attacked at the local, state, and federal level.

TMA and TMA Alliance members can choose from among these membership levels:

Basic Membership: $125/year, $11/month (Student $10, Resident $40, Alliance $55) Biweekly newsletter, political activities update, election guide, access to all TEXPAC board meetings

300 Club: $300/year, $25/month (Student/Resident $60) Benefits of Basic Membership plus invitation to 300 Club receptions with elected officials

Capitol Club: $1,000/year, $84/month (Student/Resident $200) Benefits of 300 Club, plus priority for delivering contributions to elected officials and candidates, Capitol Club winter jacket (if you join or rejoin between 2014 and 2015), and special recognition at TEXPAC conference and networking events

Patron Club: $5,000/first year, $417/month ($2,500 every year continuously renewed) Benefits of Capitol Club, plus Patron Club winter jacket, priority ranking for attendance at political events, free admission to any TEXPAC-hosted fundraiser, and annual Patron Club Dinner with an elected official.

To join TEXPAC or renew your membership today, call (800) 880-1300 ext. 1361.

Texas Medical Association Political Action Committee (TEXPAC) is a bipartisan political action committee of TMA and affiliated with the American Medical Association Political Action Committee (AMPAC) for congressional contribution purposes only. Its goal is to support and elect promedicine candidates on both the federal level and the state level. Voluntary contributions by individuals to TEXPAC should be written on personal checks. Funds attributed to individuals or professional associations (PAs) that would exceed federal contribution limits will be placed in the TEXPAC statewide account to support nonfederal political candidates. Contributions are not limited to the suggested amounts. TEXPAC will not favor or disadvantage anyone based on the amounts or failure to make contributions. Contributions used for federal purposes are subject to the prohibitions and limitations of the Federal Election Campaign Act.

Contributions or gifts to TEXPAC or any county medical society PAC are not deductible as charitable contributions or business expenses for federal income tax purposes.

Federal law requires us to use our best efforts to collect and report the name, mailing address, occupation, and name of employer of individuals whose contributions exceed $200 in a calendar year. To satisfy this regulation, please include your occupation and employer information in the space provided. Contributions from a practice business account must disclose the name of the practice and the allocation of contributions for each contributing owner. Should you have any questions, please call TEXPAC at (512) 370-1363.