

PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS & UPDATES

TEXAS RESEARCH-TO-POLICY COLLABORATION PROJECT

September 2024



Wishing you a productive and healthy fall!



Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony: *UTHealth Houston School of Public Health in Austin*



From left: Dr. Kevin Morano, Dr. David Lakey, Kevin Dillon, Dr. Eric Boerwinkle, Dr. Deanna Hoelscher, State Rep. Donna Howard, Dr. Jennifer Shuford, Dr. Jagat Narula

On September 12, the School of Public Health in Austin was thrilled to host a ribbon-cutting event, welcoming over 100 guests, including Dr. Kevin Morano, senior vice president of academic and faculty affairs at UTHealth Houston, and Dr. Eric Boerwinkle, Dean of UTHealth Houston School of Public Health.

The new space is three blocks north of the Texas Capitol. Attendees enjoyed tours and a teaching kitchen demonstration. Our team is excited for this next chapter and knows our new facility will inspire the next generation of public health leaders. Thank you to everyone who has supported the Austin location's growth!



[See our new space in this video](#)



[View Photos from the event](#)

NEW: TX RPC Project Health Policy Resources

[Child Poverty](#)

Released September 10, 2024

[Maternity & Perinatal Care Deserts](#)

Released September 11, 2024



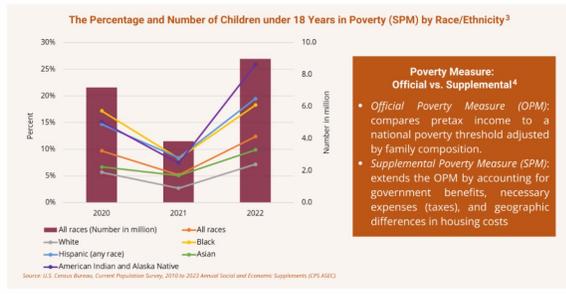
KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. 1.38 million children in Texas experienced poverty in 2022.
2. Child poverty can substantially impact child health, development, and the economy.
3. Programs that aim to improve healthcare access and address non-medical drivers of health could alleviate child poverty and enhance health outcomes.

Background

The 117th U.S. Congress (2021-2022) passed the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021, on March 11, 2021, to provide economic relief for those who were impacted during the pandemic.¹

- This relief included direct stimulus payments, increased value of SNAP benefits, increased Child Tax Credit, Earned Income Tax Credit, and childcare assistance.¹
- As a result of the ARPA, the U.S. child (under 18 years) poverty rate, decreased from 9.7% in 2020 to 5.2% in 2021, the lowest level since the 1970s, according to the Supplemental Poverty Measures (SPM).²
 - However, the SPM child poverty rate increased again to 12.4% in 2022 when these benefits expired.



This report discusses the status of child poverty in Texas and provides recommendations on strategies to alleviate child poverty.

- Compared to adults and older adults, a higher proportion of children were living in poverty. About 1.38 million Texas children were experiencing poverty in 2022.
- Poverty has substantial long-term economic impacts. Annual costs of child poverty are between \$800 billion and \$1.1 trillion in the U.S.
- Programs and policies addressing non-medical health drivers could alleviate poverty and enhance health and well-being.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Texas continues to face a state-wide maternal morbidity and mortality crisis, which has resulted in part from the lack of geographical access to maternity and perinatal care.
2. Traveling further to attend healthcare appointments can make it difficult to receive adequate care, increasing the likelihood of adverse outcomes.
3. Several legislative actions in Texas have addressed the strain on rural hospitals and obstetric (OB) providers, and it is important to build on this work so that rural communities can maintain care.

Hospital Closures

Many publicly funded rural hospitals have struggled in recent years due to: 1) low, stagnant Medicaid and Medicare payments; 2) increased costs; 3) declining rural populations; 4) high rates of uninsurance; and 5) widespread healthcare staffing shortages.^{1,3}

Rural Hospital Closures: Nationwide^{4,6} and State^{5,7}

192 hospitals have closed in the United States since 2005, and 267 OB units (25%) closed between 2011 and 2021.

25 hospitals (14%) have closed in Texas since 2005, and 17 OB units closed between 2011 and 2021.



Only 40% of rural hospitals in Texas still have a labor and delivery unit.⁸

- Most hospital OB unit closures across the U.S. were among facilities serving mainly Black patients.²
- OB units are often the first to be shut down when hospitals are struggling to keep their doors open.⁸
 - Labor & delivery (L&D) are costly. In most cases, hospitals do not profit from these services — and may even lose money — since Medicaid does not reimburse their full cost.^{1,3,9}

When patients are forced to travel outside of their communities to receive obstetric care, they are likely to return to that setting for future medical needs like primary care and pediatrics.

- With dwindling numbers of patients, rural facilities struggle to cover costs and a cycle develops:^{1,8}



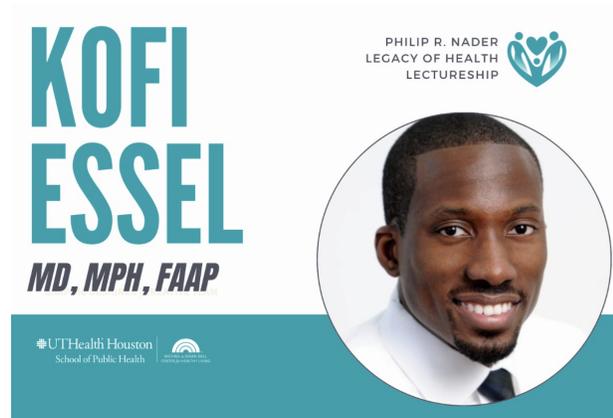
This report discusses the statewide maternal morbidity and mortality status and the need for maternal and perinatal care in Texas.

- 47% of counties in Texas were considered maternity care deserts in 2022, compared to 33% in the U.S.
- When women are unable to get adequate prenatal, labor and delivery, and postpartum care, statewide maternal morbidity and mortality statuses are exacerbated.
- Long-term solutions are needed to address the strain on rural hospitals and obstetric providers and to mitigate the impacts of maternity care deserts.

2024 Philip R. Nader Legacy of Health Lectureship

Food as Medicine in Pediatrics: A Necessary Responsibility

October 3, 2024 | 12PM-1PM CT



KOFI ESSEL
MD, MPH, FAAP

PHILIP R. NADER
LEGACY OF HEALTH
LECTURESHIP



UTHealth Houston
School of Public Health

Keynote speaker Dr. Kofi Essel will emphasize the importance of a holistic, family-centered approach that extends beyond adults to include the individual child and the entire household. He will highlight how food-based interventions, such as medically tailored meals and produce prescriptions, hold immense potential to prevent and manage chronic conditions, particularly when leveraging the reach of large healthcare organizations.

The lecture will underscore the critical responsibility of healthcare providers and partners in championing "food as medicine" initiatives and empowering families to harness the transformative power of nutrition as a cornerstone of primary prevention and population-based care.

Register
now!

Lunch & Learn: Please join us on September 30th

Non-Medical Drivers of Health: A Solution to Healthcare Cost and Quality

September 30, 2024 | 11:30AM-12:30PM CT
Legislative Conference Center



Featuring:



Elena M. Marks, JD, MPH
Senior Fellow in Health Policy
Center for Health and Biosciences
Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy



Charles W. Mathias, PhD
Director, Texas Consortium for the Non-Medical Drivers of Health
Center for Health and Biosciences
Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy

Register for Lunch
Today!

Partner Resources

Enhancing Texas' Health Care Investments by Addressing Patients' Non-Medical Needs

Enhancing Texas' Health Care Investments by Addressing Patients' Non-Medical Needs

Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy
September 16, 2024

Elena M. Marks, JD, MPH
Senior Fellow in Health Policy

Charles W. Mathias, PhD
Director, Texas Consortium for the Non-Medical Drivers of
Health, Center for Health and Biosciences

With nearly \$50 billion in annual healthcare expenditures, Texas has a unique opportunity to enhance the value of its spending by increasing its investment in non-medical services that significantly impact health outcomes.

This report delves into Texas' investments in non-medical services, presents policy options for advancing this work, and provides examples from other states. It concludes with recommendations on pathways for Texas to consider, to maximize the value of its healthcare expenditures.

Texas Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Review Committee and Department of State Health Services Joint Biennial Report 2024

Texas Department of State Health Services
September 1, 2024

This report contains findings and recommendations to reduce the incidence of pregnancy-related death and maternal morbidity related to its review of cases from 2020.

Resource Corner

The TX RPC Project develops accessible and accurate public health policy-related resources from field experts. If you want to request information on a public health topic, complete the following form.

[Access the Request Form](#)

See below for links to specific resource categories on our website:

- [Health Policy Resources](#)
- [Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living Webinars](#)
- [TX RPC Project Newsletters Archive](#)
- [Texas Legislative Bill Tracker](#)
- [Texas Child Health Status Reports and Toolkits](#)
- [Newsletter Resource Sharing Form for Publication](#)

About TX RPC Project

The [Texas Research-to-Policy Collaboration \(TX RPC\) Project](#) is a nonpartisan network that aims to bridge research and policy by supporting partnerships between child health researchers and legislators.

The TX RPC Project team and overall network are available to support Texas legislators with informational requests or resources related to health during the interim and in preparation for the 2025 Legislative Session.

If you and your legislative office are interested in collaborating with our team to receive data-driven information at state, district, and local levels, please reach out to TXRPCNetwork@uth.tmc.edu.

Contact Our Team

For more information, email TXRPCNetwork@uth.tmc.edu.

[Deanna M. Hoelscher, PhD, RDN, LD, CNS, FISBNPA](#), Principal Investigator

[Alexandra van den Berg, PhD, MPH](#), Co-Investigator

[Tiffni Menendez, MPH](#), Project Director

[Rachel Linton, MPH](#), Project Manager

[Yuzi Zhang, PhD, MS](#), Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Editor

[Shelby Flores-Thorpe, PhD, MEd, CHES](#), Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Editor

[Kirsten Handler](#), Communication Specialist, Editor



Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living | 1836 San Jacinto Blvd, Suite 510 | Austin, TX 78701
US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!