

and directs the requests to DSHS' IRB for approval. Additionally, the branch supplies geographic information systems data and mapping to several DSHS programs, emergency operations, and external customers.

Health Provider Resources

The Health Provider Resources Branch researches the types and sources of workforce-related data needed to address current and future staffing levels of healthcare professions, especially for nurses in Texas. The branch conducts an annual statewide survey of hospitals on financial data, utilization rates, uncompensated care, and community benefits in conjunction with the American Hospital Association and the Texas Hospital Association. The Branch designates sites as Medically Underserved Populations, so that physician assistants and nurse practitioners have permission to write prescriptions in accordance with Title 25, Chapter 13, Subchapter C, Texas Administrative Code.

Texas Health Care Information Collection (THCIC)

THCIC, formerly known as the Texas Health Care Information Council, collects inpatient and a subset of outpatient data, under Chapter 108, Texas Health and Safety Code. Beginning in 2014, THCIC will also collect emergency department data. THCIC staff produces annual reports on the quality of inpatient care in Texas hospitals and pediatric hospitals and the incidence of preventable hospitalizations. Staff is currently developing reports on potentially preventable complications and preventable readmissions; staff will develop reports on preventable emergency visits upon receiving emergency department data. The THCIC team is working with DSHS IT staff to house and post an inpatient data-viewing program for the public. The team trains hospital and ambulatory surgical center staff to submit data, correct and certify the data, and track and monitor the data. THCIC staff works with facilities to comply with the law, rules, and submission requirements and, if needed, works with the Office of General Counsel on enforcement of penalties. The team collects data from Texas health maintenance organizations (HMOs) and transfers that data to the Office of Public Insurance Counsel for publication. THCIC staff produces and markets public use data files, inpatient, outpatient, and, in the future, emergency department data; and creates customized research data files that contain data not included in the public use data files, which require DSHS IRB approval prior to release. THCIC staff addresses many ad hoc data requests from executive leadership and legislators throughout the year. Staff also maintains a registry of healthcare providers and referral groups available to provide life-sustaining treatment or other services relating to the Texas Advance Directives Act.

House Bill 1394, 83rd Legislature, Regular Session, 2013, subjects THCIC to a separate Sunset Advisory Commission review. The review is to consider whether THCIC meets legislative intent, maintains privacy and security, and limits data collection to that which is relevant to statutory purposes. THCIC is abolished, effective September 1, 2015, unless continued by the Legislature.