



Dear President Fann and Members of the Arizona State Senate,

On behalf of the Arizona Healthcare Advocacy Coalition (AHAC), we respectfully request your support for targeted investments in our state's healthcare system. AHAC is comprised of various physician groups who have one goal in mind: ensuring that Arizona's physicians and patients continue to have a voice in the policymaking process. The diversity of our highly respected member organizations, their experienced leadership, and their substantive expertise make the Coalition a powerful voice in the Arizona health policymaking community. AHAC has identified four key investment areas that we respectfully request be included in the FY2023 budget.

Our state is already amidst a daunting shortage of healthcare providers and the problem is sure to swell out of control if we do not take swift, decisive action to fund a workforce pipeline. AHAC strongly supports the investment outlined in HB2691 as a first step, but respectfully requests further funding for Graduate Medical Education (GME). There is much data to show that physicians tend to put down roots and practice where they do their residency training; if our state fails to fund these essential positions, we will continue to miss out on an opportunity to attract and retain physicians.

AHCCCS coverage for new mothers must be expanded from the current, inadequate 90 days to one full year postpartum. Currently, there is a dangerous coverage gap for women who become eligible for AHCCCS while they're pregnant but lose their coverage after the 90-day mark. Many lasting complications arise in the first year postpartum, in particular postpartum depression and anxiety. New mothers must have sufficient healthcare support to ensure that they and their new addition thrive.

AHCCCS coverage for diabetes self-management training has been proven to lower medical costs for those that participate and more importantly, results in much improved health outcomes. This initiative would further close the coverage gap for Arizonans on Medicaid as compared to those on private insurance plans or Medicare, who already have access to these services. Our patients deserve the information that will empower them to make healthier decisions for themselves.

Arizona's Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) should be expanded to include children whose family's income is at or below 250% of the Federal Poverty Line (FPL). Arizona has one of the lowest income eligibility thresholds in the country and this expansion would put us more in line with the national average of 255% of the FPL. Further, AHAC urges you to allow CHIP participants to remain eligible for a 12-month period. Currently, families are reevaluated on a six-month basis. This results in children suddenly losing their coverage due to common month-to-month fluctuations in their family's income. Gaps in health insurance coverage not only lead to poorer health outcomes, but they can increase overall healthcare costs in the long term.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marc Leib mo".

Marc Leib, M.D., J.D.
Chairman, Arizona Healthcare Advocacy Coalition

