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BUSINESS, 3A

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TRACE THOMAS FOR THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

Millions at risk as TX hospital funding stalls

Terri Langford
THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

As of September 1, the start of the new state fiscal year, Texas hospitals are expected to lose an estimated \$27 million daily in additional Medicaid funding.

The shortfall is the result of a decision by the Trump administration to withhold approval from Texas for about \$9.8 billion in the next year from three programs, the bulk of which affects the Comprehensive Hospital Increase Reimbursement Program (CHIRP).

This program gives hospitals additional funding to cover the difference between Medicaid rate payments and the actual costs that hospitals incur to provide services to Medicaid patients. Essentially, hospitals, which often are paid less than what they spend on Medicaid patients due to outdated payment rates set by the state, are losing out on their additional reimbursement for 2027.

Local governmental entities collect taxes from hospitals – about \$4 billion a year, according to the Texas Hospital

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Sara González
THA vice president of advocacy, public policy and political strategy

Association – and under CHIRP, the federal government matches those funds so that Texas hospitals can then use them to cover the actual costs of providing Medicaid services. Hospitals say those CHIRP dollars are critical and if they lose that funding, they will likely have to cut services to patients.

Four million low-income Texans are enrolled in Medicaid, most of them chil-

dren.

“It is impossible for a hospital to take a huge loss on a Medicaid side of their portfolio and not have that impact services across the board, regardless of what type of insurance a patient has,” said Sara González, a THA vice president of advocacy, public policy and political strategy.

In Houston alone, the impact could mean at least \$258 million less for the public healthcare system there known as Harris Health and as much as \$1.4 billion less for the region overall next year.

“The impacts would be catastrophic for Texas’ safety-net healthcare system,” said Dr. Esmaeil Porsa, president and CEO of Harris Health. “We are carefully monitoring every dollar and would be forced to make difficult decisions about maintaining critical services if this impasse continues.”

The federal government is withholding these critical dollars because they are calling into question how local

See FUNDING, Page 2A

Grant awarded to Community Healthcare Center

Presented by Episcopal Health Foundation

Lynn Walker
Wichita Falls Times Record News
USA TODAY NETWORK – TEXAS

The Community Healthcare Center in Wichita Falls has received a \$550,000 grant from Episcopal Health Foundation, according to a media release from the local center.

“The grant funding will support the development of expanded resource services designed to help patients address various challenges that affect their health and well-being,” the media release said.

“Through this initiative, CHC staff will work with patients to identify barriers to care, connect them with essential community resources, and provide ongoing support to help ensure continuity of care,” the media release said.

The media release said the services include referrals for food assistance, utility assistance programs, housing support, employment services, legal assistance and other community-based resources.

“By helping patients access the services they need and coordinating support beyond the exam room, CHC will improve access to care, reduce barriers to better health, and strengthen ... health outcomes for individuals and families throughout the communities it serves,” the media release said.

The nonprofit Community Healthcare Center was established in 1992 as a Federally Qualified Health Center. It serves residents of Wichita County and 14 surrounding counties.

The nonprofit Episcopal Health Foundation is based in Houston that serves an 81-county service area.

WFPD releases name of man killed

Lynn Walker
Wichita Falls Times Record News
USA TODAY NETWORK – TEXAS

Wichita Falls police have identified a man killed by police Wednesday night as Daniel Eduardo Arias.

In a media release about 1 p.m. Thursday, the Wichita Falls Police Department said officers were sent at 8:18 p.m. Tuesday to the 4100 block of Faith Road in reference to a high priority welfare check.

Dispatchers told officers they had received a call from Arias, who was threatening to kill himself, police said in the media release.

When officers arrived on scene they saw Arias sitting on the tailgate of a

pickup truck parked outside of his apartment and saw he was holding a handgun, police said in the media release. They began negotiating with him in an effort to get him to drop the weapon and they set up a perimeter around the scene.

Arias repeatedly challenged the officers and told them that he was going to force them to shoot him, pointing the gun at himself several times and pointing it in the direction of the officers, according to police allegations in the media release.

The SWAT Team arrived and crisis negotiators attempted to deescalate the situation, but Arias repeatedly said he was going to kill himself or force officers to kill him, the media release said.

While SWAT was holding the inner perimeter, an officer perceived “a deadly force threat from Arias” and discharged their firearm, police alleged in the media release. Arias was hit by gunfire and was pronounced dead at the scene.

“This is an active an ongoing investigation led by the WFPD Crimes Against Persons Unit,” police said in the media release. “We will provide more information as it becomes available.”

The WFPD media release did not include the name of the officer who shot Arias.

Police blocked off Call Field Road between Kemp Boulevard and Lawrence Road during the incident.

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