

***Investing in Texas: Financing Health Coverage Expansion
Conference Proceedings***

Closing

Jacqueline Angel: On behalf of my colleagues, LBJ graduate students, and honored guests, let me begin by thanking you for your participation today. All of you are here because you recognize that it is important to find ways to cover the more than 4.5 million Texans, including 1 million children and almost 2.5 million Hispanics, who do not have health insurance. Recent public opinion polls echo this concern. Findings suggest that the vast majority of Texans believe we should have the right to obtain basic health care at a reasonable cost. But how will we do this?

It is clear from the presentations and our lively discussion that several viable public and private financing options exist to begin to extend coverage to the uninsured population. It is our hope that we have stimulated your thinking about these issues, that you are challenged by them, and that you will carry this conversation forward.

As our distinguished panel pointed out, there is a myriad of problems associated with the uninsured that will call for a statewide dialogue that increases public awareness of the problem. The health, economic, and social implications are profound. Lacking access to health insurance is the single greatest barrier to obtaining timely, appropriate health care services. And many cannot afford the co-payments, deductibles, and premiums that are required to get the care they need. I could make other observations but it is late and we must conclude for the day.

But before we depart, I would like to end by saying that in planning this conference, we envisioned that our research project might help you develop plans to finance health coverage expansion in years to come. Our ultimate objective was to make our research accessible. I encourage you to visit our website to obtain completed copies of the papers.

Again, thank you for coming to our conference and have a nice weekend.