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**NEW TEXAS LAW EXPANDS ACCESS TO SAFE AND AFFORDABLE CARE AT
CONVENIENT CARE CLINICS**

--Senator Patrick and Representative Coleman Sponsor Legislation--

Philadelphia, PA and Houston, TX (July 14, 2009) – The Texas legislature passed legislation that goes into effect of September 1, 2009 that amends Texas law governing physician alternative practice sites, such as retail-based Convenient Care clinics. SB 532, supported by the Convenient Care Association and the Texas Medical Association, and sponsored by State Senator Dan Patrick (R-Houston) and Representative Garnet Coleman (D-Houston), increases Texans' access to affordable health care while ensuring high standards for quality of care.

Convenient Care clinics are health care facilities located in high-traffic retail outlets with pharmacies. They are staffed by nurse practitioners and physician assistants who provide affordable, accessible, non-emergency care to consumers who otherwise might not be able to get it conveniently and at a low-cost.

SB 532 streamlines requirements for physicians who oversee the nurse practitioners and physician assistants working at Convenient Care clinics. This, in turn, reduces clinic costs without compromising quality of care or integration with the medical community, which is particularly important in Texas where 25 percent of the state's residents are uninsured and 20 percent report having forgone medical care due to its high costs.

"Convenient Care clinics have treated millions of patients throughout the country and hundreds of thousands of patients in Texas over the last four years. The new law governing alternative practice sites helps ensure that these clinics will continue to provide easy access to affordable health care throughout the state," said Tine Hansen-Turton, Executive Director of the Convenient Care Association.

"This new law ensures that physicians will continue to monitor convenient care clinics in order to protect patient safety, ensure positive health outcomes, and make certain that patients with more serious illnesses are referred for appropriate follow-up care," said William H. Fleming III, MD, president of the Texas Medical Association.

Currently, four Convenient Care Association member companies operate clinics inside retail outlets in Texas.

- MinuteClinic, in CVS/pharmacy stores
- RediClinic, in H-E-B stores

- Take Care Health Systems, in Walgreens pharmacies
- CHRISTUS Medical Group, in Walmart stores

“While our nation argues how to overhaul the health care system, Texas continues making steady and strong steps toward meaningful reform. I'm proud to be a part of the effort for increasing access to quality health care,” said Senator Patrick. “It creates more opportunities for Texans to receive affordable, basic medical care in convenient retail locations, and as a result, it frees up physicians so they can spend more time treating patients with complex medical conditions.”

“Our state’s physician practices, urgent care clinics and emergency rooms are overburdened, resulting in excessive wait times and unnecessarily high costs for patients,” said Representative Coleman. “Allowing Convenient Care clinics to serve as accessible, affordable points of care for common family illnesses will help to relieve the stress on our health care system and reduce its cost.”

About the Convenient Care Association

The Convenient Care Association is a national non-profit organization comprised of leaders of the retail-based convenient care industry. CCA members operate more than 95 percent of the Convenient Care clinics in the United States, which today includes over 1,200 clinics in 31 states. All CCA member clinics adhere to Quality and Safety Standards and are certified or accredited through a third party. For more information or to find a clinic near you, please visit www.ccaclinics.org.

About the Texas Medical Association

The Texas Medical Association is the largest state medical society in the nation, representing nearly 44,000 physician and medical student members. It is located in Austin and has 120 component county medical societies around the state. TMA’s key objective since 1853 is to improve the health of all Texans.

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