

Current Articles & Research Resources, February 28

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In this weekly post, we feature helpful research tools and recent articles of interest to the legislative community.

- Consider how the state's [oil and gas](#) industry affects transportation infrastructure. (Texas A&M Transportation Institute, February 6, 2019)
- Read about federal [mail and wire fraud](#) statutes. (Congressional Research Service, February 11, 2019)
- Find where to [dispose](#) of prescription drugs. (Google, February 21, 2019)
- See which Texas counties are included in the recent federal [disaster declaration](#) related to last year's flooding and storms. (The White House, February 25, 2019)

Members of the Texas legislative community may request the articles below [here](#) or by calling 512-463-1252.

- "[Better state budget, policy decisions can improve health](#)." By Jennifer Sullivan. *Center on Budget and Policy Priorities*, February 21, 2019, pp. 1-23. Discusses how states can invest in programs to affect the "social determinants of health" – health programs, education, the environment, transit, and infrastructure – apart from health care policy. Outlines the role of race/ethnicity and income in health outcomes.
- "One border crisis averted?" By Henry Gass. *Christian Science Monitor*, February 11, 2019, pp. 16-17. Highlights the proactive approach El Paso Water's Edmund Archuleta has taken to improve water conservation. Discusses the successful program he implemented with his counterpart in Juárez to share data and information to conserve the Hueco Bolson aquifer.
- "Buoyed by strong economies, most states spend more on higher ed." By Eric Kelderman. *Chronicle of Higher Education*, February 8, 2019, p. A25. Reports state spending on higher education grew almost four percent in fiscal year 2018-19 according to the "[Grapevine](#)" survey compiled by the Center for the Study of Education Policy at Illinois State University and the State Higher Education Executive Officers.
- "What's the future of transportation funding?" By Paul K. Harral. *Fort Worth Business Press*, February 18-24, 2019, pp. 36-38. Summarizes panel discussion on transportation funding from the Northeast Tarrant Transportation Summit from February 8, 2019.
- "Access to e-prescriptions and related technologies before and after Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria." By Jaime Y. Smith and Max M. Sow. *Health Affairs*, February 2019, pp. 205-211. Finds that while e-prescribing and medication history transactions decreased considerably during the major 2017 hurricanes, transaction volumes returned to normal levels in the days immediately following Hurricanes Harvey and Irma.

Notes that e-prescribing in Puerto Rico took much longer to return to baseline levels, demonstrating the importance of infrastructure to maintain accessibility of electronic health records [EHRs] in a disaster.

- "Hospital prices grew substantially faster than physician prices for hospital-based care in 2007-14." By Zack Cooper, et al. *Health Affairs*, February 2019, pp. 184-189.

Reports that for inpatient care, hospital prices grew 42 percent from 2007-2014, while physician prices grew 18 percent; for hospital-based outpatient care, hospital prices grew 25 percent, while physician prices grew 6 percent. Suggests several approaches policymakers could take to address hospital price growth.

- "Should physicians recommend replacing opioids with cannabis?" By Keith Humphreys and Richard Saltz. *JAMA (Journal of the American Medical Association)*, February 19, 2019, pp. 639-640.

Considers the efficacy of cannabis for chronic pain and for opioid use disorder and the risks of cannabis use. Argues that if cannabis is to become recommended medicine, it should be held to medical standards.

- "Opportunity Zone investments: The new emerald city of tax law." By Steven Berman and Louis Weller. *Journal of MultiState Taxation and Incentives*, February 2019, pp. 6-21.

Describes Opportunity Zones, the federal economic development program included in the *2017 Tax Cuts and Job Act*, to encourage investment and economic growth in economically distressed or disadvantaged communities.

- "The connected city: A platform for city planners, citizens, and utilities." By Richelle Elberg and Eric Woods. *Public Utilities Fortnightly*, February 11, 2019, pp. 31-33.

Describes different applications in the planning or deployment of 4G/5G networks within communities.

- "Crank up the A/C, crank up the cost: States consider 'surge pricing' for power." By Rebecca Beitsch. *Stateline (Pew Charitable Trusts)*, February 19, 2019, pp. 1-5.

Reports several states are experimenting with time-of-use pricing, increasing electricity rates during peak hours. Notes critics' concerns about how surge pricing will impact senior citizens and low-income people enrolled in electric bill assistance programs.

- "Changing tunes?" By Dax Gonzalez. *Texas Lone Star (Texas Association of School Boards)*, January/February 2019, pp. 8-11.

Examines why the 86th legislative session is expected to be different from the 85th session and how education legislation could be affected. Addresses property taxes, vouchers, special education services, school security, and Hurricane Harvey.

- "Bypassing the middle man." By Joey Berlin. *Texas Medicine*, February 2019, pp. 28-31.

Considers the arguments for and against allowing physicians to dispense medication in their offices. Points out that Texas is one of four states that, for the most part, bans physicians from dispensing medications. Cites [SB546](#), [82nd Legislature, R.S.](#), as past effort to allow physicians to dispense medication.

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