

TESTIMONY TO SUNSET COMMISSION

Thursday, November 13, 2014
9 am
Senate Finance Committee Room
Room E1.036, Capitol Extension

Good morning, Madam Chair and members of the Sunset Commission. I am Rogene Gee Calvert, executive administrator of the Texas Dentists Group Practice Association (TDGPA), a grassroots coalition of Texan dentists who own and manage their own practices.

I am speaking today on behalf of the members of our association who support some of the recommendations made in the Sunset Commission's Staff Report on the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC).

Under Issue 2:

Recommendation 3: Require HHSC to better define and strengthen its role in both procurement and contract monitoring by strengthening monitoring of contracts at HHSC. Our association members hope that this recommendation will address some of the issues they face with their Medicaid contractors. Specifically, there is often no transparency, consistency or logic to patient assignments. Members of the same family can be assigned to different providers even though the contractor Maximus says they use prior history, geography and other family members' assignments as criteria. Clients are assigned a dental home which are supposed to encourage their dental care. However, dental home assignments, handled by the MCO contractor, often lead to more

frustration and confusion among clients thus discouraging them from continuing their visits.

Under Issue 5:

Recommendation 1: Require HHSC to streamline the Medicaid provider enrollment and credentialing processes. This has been a major problem for providers to meet all the various credentialing processes such as the National Provider Identifier or NPI, the Texas Provider Identifier for Medicaid or TPI and the dental managed care plans. It could take as much as 90 days before providers can begin to provide services to their Medicaid patients and be able to bill for services, since back billing to the date the application was received is no longer allowed. This will be a major improvement for providers and clients.

Other recommendations are supported by TDGPA such as:

Issue 7, Recommendation 1: Direct the Health and Human Services Commission to elevate oversight and management of data initiatives, including creation of a centralized office with clear authority to oversee strategic use of data. The use of data and electronic health records are initiatives that are essential now as providers are having to comply with the requirements of the ACA. Many of them have put major financial and staff resources into electronic health records. Why shouldn't HHSC do the same?

Issues 10 and 11 that recommend ways to better define the role and scope of the OIG and improve its management, in particular as it relates to Credible Allegation of Fraud (CAF) hold.

Streamlining and clarifying OIG's payment hold authority and requiring OIG to pay all costs of CAF hold hearings at the SOAH will be a service to all involved.

On behalf of the TDGPA, I would like to commend the Sunset Commission staff for conducting an excellent review and synthesizing the findings to result in meaningful recommendations aimed at improving services for all clients. Also, we commend the Commissioners for your diligence, determination and commitment in ensuring this information is carefully considered and acted upon.

As a result of this major effort, our state programs can only get better and, more importantly, our clients will be served in a more efficient and effective way.