

OCT 17 2014

Veronda L. Durden
Commissioner

October 17, 2014

Mr. Ken Levine
Director
Sunset Advisory Commission
1501 North Congress, 6th Floor
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Mr. Levine:

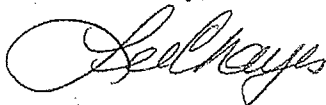
On behalf of the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) Advisory Council, I'd like to thank you and your staff for their diligent and comprehensive work over the last few months. We also appreciate the opportunity to voice our concerns with the recommendations in the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) and System Issues Staff Report.

The DARS Council unanimously opposes recommendation 1.1. This consolidation creates a system that will make access to rehabilitation services more difficult for people of all ages. The proposed organizational structure or one similar that buries specific rehabilitation services under a generic term like "medical and social services" and does not ensure program control of budget authority and policy is not appropriate. This structure gives no indication where people would naturally go for rehabilitation services and creates a system too large to meet the needs of individual consumers. Further, the abolishment of the agency advisory Councils removes transparency and accountability to the public, elected officials, and the consumers they serve.

The Council has chosen not to provide a formal response on other issues in the report at this time.

Thank you again.

Sincerely,

Lee Chayes
Chair, DARS Advisory Council