

Written Testimony

By Nancy Lewis, PT, Sc.D.
Chair, Payment Policy Committee
Texas Physical Therapy Association

**Sunset Advisory Commission Hearing
on the Health & Human Services Commission Report**

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Good morning. My name is Nancy Lewis and I am a physical therapist from Dumas and represent the Texas Physical Therapy Association. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify today on the Sunset Commission's Health and Human Services Commission Report, Issue Five.

Many physical therapists like myself treat Medicaid patients. I have been treating patients in a rural setting for over 20 years, with patients sometimes traveling over 60 miles to be seen at my small private practice. One of my patients is a two-year old boy who, due to a seizure disorder, suffers from partial paralysis of one side. I began treating him as a contracted provider through another organization; however, I could not continue in that role so the patient's family began transporting him to our practice, 45 minutes away. The family has been forced to rely on grandparents to help pay for therapy services because I have not been able to get credentialed into their Medicaid managed care plan despite many months of attempting to do so because the plan arbitrarily restricts the number of providers in a region.

Many PTs like myself have not be able to continue treating our Medicaid patients because we are prohibited access to their managed care plans despite our willingness to accept their reduced rates. Even if we make it through the managed care credentialing process, we're often presented with numerous challenges in navigating their policies, which vary greatly from plan-to-plan and from traditional Medicaid fee-for-service. We also face challenges when attempting to identify the HHSC department responsible for oversight of the managed care organizations to assist us when issues arise.

We strongly support the Sunset staff recommendations to provide better oversight to the Medicaid managed care plans and streamline the Medicaid provider enrollment and credentialing process. The current process is overly burdensome and presents an additional barrier to therapists willing to treat Medicaid patients.

We also recommend that the Commission consider creating a policy that requires managed care organizations to allow Medicaid-enrolled providers to access their network if they are willing to accept that their rates. This will allow providers to continue treating existing Medicaid patients like mine and ensure continued access to care.

Thank you for your time and consideration.