



June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2014

Ken Levine  
Director  
Sunset Advisory Commission  
PO Box 13066  
Austin, TX 78711

Dear Mr. Levine,

The Texas e-Health Alliance would like to thank the Sunset Advisory Commission for the opportunity to comment on the staff report for the Department of Aging and Disability Services. As Texas' leading advocate, from local communities to the national level, for the use of information technology to improve the health care system for patients, we appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback. Below are our responses to each issue and set of recommendations in the report that relates directly to our organization's work, along with comments for your consideration.

**Issue: Despite Declining Enrollment, Skyrocketing Costs, and Questionable Quality of Care, Texas Continues to Operate 13 SSLCs**

**Response:** Generally, we agree with the proposed recommendations. Consolidation of SSLCs, while politically difficult, is necessary for the long-term fiscal health of the program. DADS should systematically evaluate how implementing HIT components can enhance care in these settings. This evaluation should include not only the current planned lifetime medical record but how care is coordinated with external entities including telemedicine providers and health information exchanges.

**Issue: To Transition From SSLCs to the Community, People With Higher Behavioral and Medical Needs Require Extra Support**

**Response:** We agree with the proposed recommendations.

**Issue: DADS Lacks Effective Means for Ensuring Its Clients Receive Adequate Care in Day Habilitation Facilities**

**Response:** Generally, we agree with these recommendations. Additional transparency is needed for these facilities to be successful. DADS may also want to consider using technology to standardize functions such as training for staff, given the high levels of turnover at these facilities.

**Issue: DADS Lacks a Comprehensive, Effective Approach to Contract Management, Which Increases Financial Risks to the State**

**Response:** We strongly agree with the proposed recommendations. DADS contract management should be aligned with HHSC contract management, since many IT and other infrastructure providers have contracts with both agencies.





Issue: DADS' Consumer Information Website Lacks Clear and Consistent Information For Helping the Public Select Long-Term Care Providers

Response: We strongly agree with the proposed recommendations.

Issue: One DADS Reporting Requirement Is No Longer Necessary

Response: We agree with the proposed recommendation.

Issue: Texas Has a Continuing Need for DADS' Services, but Decisions on the Agency's Structure Await Sunset's Analysis of the HHS System Overall

Response: We agree with the proposed recommendation.

Please contact Nora Belcher, TeHA Executive Director, at 512/536-1340 or by email at [nora@txeha.org](mailto:nora@txeha.org) if you have any questions or need additional information. We look forward to supporting the work of the Sunset Advisory Commission and Sunset staff throughout the Sunset process.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cindy D. Hielscher".

Cindy Hielscher  
President  
Texas e-Health Alliance

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ken Pool, MD".

Ken Pool, MD  
Vice-President  
Texas e-Health Alliance

