

September 23, 2020

Chairman James Frank and Members
House Human Services Committee

Submitted via: Courtney.DeBower_HC@house.texas.gov

RE: Committee hearing comments related to Health Care Access and Medicaid; 2.2) The next phase of the 1115 Healthcare Transformation and Quality Improvement Program Waiver and 2.5) The Healthy Texas Women Section 1115 Demonstration Waiver.

Chairman Frank and Members of the House Human Services Committee,

On behalf of Legacy Community Health, the largest Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) in Texas, we appreciate the opportunity to comment. Legacy has 41 locations across Houston, Deer Park, Baytown and Beaumont. 27 of our facilities are school-based and have been closed due to school closures associated with COVID-19. We are hoping to re-open these facilities when appropriate. Legacy was at the forefront of the COVID-19 crisis in Harris County and Jefferson County, and was the first healthcare entity to open three public walk-up testing sites to serve patients in Houston and Beaumont.

We are thankful for the swift action by Governor Abbott and HHSC that provided a waiver for FQHCs to provide telemedicine services, and we look forward to the finalization of these rules in the fall to make them permanent.

2.2) The next phase of the 1115 Healthcare Transformation and Quality Improvement Program Waiver;

Although FQHCs, for the most part, are not the recipient of 1115 waiver project funding directly, some FQHCs contract with hospital districts, participate in DSRIP projects, are Healthy Texas Women's grantees, and collaborate with hospital districts informally to deliver care because but we are often treating many of the same patients as our hospital districts.

It is essential that our hospital district partners receive 1115 waiver funding. FQHCs are designed for preventative care and healthcare maintenance, but depend greatly on our hospital districts to care for patients that need to be hospitalized or receive specialty care.

We also recommend that FQHCs be at the table during discussions of renewing the 1115 waiver, more so than they have in the past. We believe that FQHCs play a vital role in lowering healthcare costs and creating innovative approaches to treating vulnerable patient populations. As this committee is studying the importance of safety-net facilities in Texas and considering the renewal of these programs, our hope is that FQHCs will be central to those discussions.

Thank you for the opportunity to engage on these important issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Katy Caldwell'.

Katy Caldwell, CEO