

PUBLIC COMMENTS

HB 2658

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Hearing Date: March 30, 2021 8:00 AM

Terri Carriker

Self, Daughter, Catherine, and Protect Texas Fragile Kids

Austin, TX

Firstly, I am shocked this bill was scheduled for a hearing. Though we are highly impacted stakeholders, we weren't included in any discussion surrounding this bill. Secondly, as you consider information and testimony, please separate in your mind, the medically fragile/complex population from the general Medicaid population. The impact of these changes differs significantly for each of these member populations. We acknowledge that for the general Medicaid population the managed care model works well, but for our kids, it does not. Five years ago we pleaded not to be rolled into this service delivery model. We made a clear case that this is an inappropriate model for our kids. We were brushed off and told that we didn't know or understand how this was going to be so good for us. For 5 years, it has not been. Protect Texas Fragile Kids was born from the fallout of this legislative disaster. So now the chickens have come home to roost. The experiment has failed. The MCOs are struggling, and they want to make up their shortfalls off the backs of our children. While we are a small percentage of the member numbers, we account for highest costs. Rather than working to restructure, the MCOs' only answer is to wrest more power away from providers and patients, giving the MCOs broad and sweeping control over our children's medical choices and by virtue, their medical treatment, allowing them to limit and deny services with impunity.

Two weeks ago, Jamie Dudensing, CEO of Texas Association of Health Plans stood before the article II subcommittee on managed care accountability and oversight and touted what a powerful tool it is for members to be able to change MCOs at will. Even though she wildly mischaracterized the process and ease by which this happens, she was correct. It is really the only tool we have. In fact, a couple of years ago, the threat of mass exodus from two separate plans brought these MCOs back to the table to negotiate more fair reimbursement rates to specialty providers in order to keep them contracted in-network. No wonder it seems so appealing to take that protection from us. Further, provisions that change definitions of existing patient-provider relationship run completely afoul of the stated legislative intent of SB 1207 that was passed last session. "The goal of the coordination of care provision in SB 1207 was to eliminate barriers to care for children with complex needs and to ensure continuity of care for specialty providers and prescriptions," (Sen Perry, Reps Krause and Leach) Provisions and changes in this bill are harmful to both patients and providers. If they have done such a great job for our kids, why are we parents, often overwhelmed and nearly buried under the medical care of our kids, making sacrifices of our very limited time and energy to plead with lawmakers not to be fooled by the MCOs? I promise if our kids were well-served we would be silent. Please take care of our fragile little Texas. Vote No to HB2568

Alexis Ward

National Seating & Mobility

San Antonio, TX

National Seating & Mobility (NSM) is North America's most experienced provider of Complex Rehab Technology (CRT), our core product offerings include medically necessary and individually configured manual and power wheelchairs, seating and positioning systems, and other adaptive equipment. Since our founding in 1992, we have grown to a nationwide network of respected professionals and dedicated specialists. NSM and our wholly owned entities, Travis Medical Sales Corp and Allumed, Inc., have a combined 26 locations in the State of Texas, making us the largest CRT provider in the state providing critical CRT services to TMHP recipients as well as Texas Managed Medicaid MCO members.

Adequate access to CRT does more than provide function, independence and access to the community. It also plays a critical role in keeping health care costs down for a population of people who are the most medically fragile and are at the greatest risk for health care expenses. In this context it's important to recognize that the proper provision and use of CRT reduces medical

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complications, clinical interventions, hospitalizations, and institutionalizations, as well as caregiver assistance and additional services requirements

We strongly support the changes in HB 2658 surrounding continuity of care through aligning recipient enrollment with that of federal law and commercial coverage guidelines. This legislation coupled with SB 1207, HB3677, HB3678 and HB3679 will ensure continuity of care for the medically fragile population in TX and provides a mechanism for individuals to continue working with providers they have established relationships with.

Thank you for your consideration,

Alexis Ward
Vice President, Payer Relations

Jull Hutchings
PTFK/medically fragile son
McKinney, TX

OPPOSED

HB2658 directly affects implementation of the managed care reforms and patient protections passed last session, and allows the MCOs to further limit and restrict access to care while continuing to fail our children and most vulnerable citizens.

danny jones
self
odessa, TX

I AM TOTALLY AGAINST HB2658

Heather Trichel, BSN
Self, RN
Terrell, TX

It would be inappropriate to allow managed care organizations to assign providers for all Medicaid members. Some children need specialized care that not all providers are equipped to deliver. Not all pediatricians have the necessary level of experience to provide adequate care for children with highly specialized needs. This bill has the potential to diminish the quality of life of children with special needs in Texas. It is important that these medical decisions be made by someone with an intimate knowledge and understanding of the specific child in order to prolong their lives and improve quality of life.

Wendy Carpenter
Self/nurse
Mesquite, TX

Most Medicaid Pediatricians are uncomfortable with the care of complex issues. When a child with as many diagnoses as special needs children that require many specialists. The rapport and trust that is built in the care of these children is important. Complex children are seen often and need doctors who know and are knowledgeable of the care these children require. Having a new person in the care of the child can lead to deadly results. Symptoms can be missed and/ or misdiagnosed. It is important for families to build a relationship with the PCP over years. Changing doctors is difficult. We just had that experience with a serious illness and almost lost our fight for our special child. During the snow storm, we had to be transported to a new hospital and set of doctors. They misdiagnosed and changed the care several times before listening to us and when they started conferring with our specialists she started to improve and after 30 days came home. We have had to push for medications, DME supplies,

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specialized equipment. Let us keep our doctors of our choice.

Laura Boyer

Self - Mother of a medically complex child

Buda, TX

I vehemently oppose this bill as it seeks to undermine protections already afforded to my child. When I read that this bill gives the MCO the right to change and assign a new primary care provider, I thought "This can't possibly be true!". That right should be mine and mine alone. Children like my daughter have complex medical histories. We should not be forced to change providers at the whim of the insurance companies. The relationships we build with our children's PCP is critical to the ongoing and constant care they need. Please take that into consideration when you vote on this bill. It genuinely hurts our children. They deserve to be protected.

Madeleine Harrison

Self, attorney

Plano, TX

I am opposed to this bill and ask the Committee to vote against it. As an attorney and the mother of a medically fragile child, I am extremely concerned about the ramifications of this bill. As written, it increases MCO capitation rates, allows the MCO to reassign my child's primary care physician, and redefines the existing patient-provider relationship. These actions would severely impact the care and health we have worked so hard to establish for our son for the last 13yrs.

Riley Oldham

Self student

Sanger, TX

PLEASE VOTE AGAINST THIS BILL.
THIS BILL IS DETRIMENTAL TO SPECIAL NEEDS KIDS AND THEIR CONTINUITY OF CARE. IT WILL NEGATIVELY AFFECT THEIR HEALTH. VOTE NO.

Allie Oldham

Self/hairdresser

Keller, TX

PLEASE VOTE AGAINST THIS BILL.
THIS BILL IS DETRIMENTAL TO SPECIAL NEEDS KIDS AND THEIR CONTINUITY OF CARE. IT WILL NEGATIVELY AFFECT THEIR HEALTH. VOTE NO.

Michelle Oldham

Self / LVN

Sanger, TX

Please vote against this bill. It will be detrimental to the continuity of care for special needs kids and will negatively affect their health.

Cristina Villarreal

PTFK

Rio Grande City, TX

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I strongly oppose HB 2658.

I believe it's an atrocity to strip parents of their rights to select their child's physicians and specialists. As a parent of a special needs child, I know that building relationships with my child's doctors is crucial to proper and adequate care. My child can't be bounced around from one doctor to another based on an MCO's whim and arbitrary criteria. We, the parents, should also have the right to select or change MCO when we deem it appropriate based on our children's needs.

Mitchell Rose

Self

Krum, TX

PLEASE VOTE AGAINST THIS BILL.

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Erica Rutledge

Self

Fort worth, TX

PLEASE VOTE AGAINST THIS BILL.

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Casey Frost, Mr.

Self

Plano, TX

Comment :

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Lori Borden

Self

Keller, TX

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Wes Oldham

Self - Firefighter

Sanger, TX

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Alexis Benitez
reed oldham
spring, TX

PLEASE VOTE AGAINST THIS BILL.
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Bailey Renaud
Self
Sanger, TX

PLEASE VOTE AGAINST THIS BILL.
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Joshua Martin
Self
Houston, TX

PLEASE VOTE AGAINST THIS BILL.
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Chase Rutledge
Public
Ft worth, TX

PLEASE VOTE AGAINST THIS BILL. L
THIS BILL IS DETRIMENTAL TO SPECIAL NEEDS KIDS AND THEIR CONTINUITY OF CARE. IT WILL NEGATIVELY AFFECT THEIR HEALTH. VOTE NO.

Megan Klein
Self/software
Corinth, TX

Please vote against this bill. It will be detrimental to special needs kids and their health.

Khairun nisa Hassanali, Dr.
Self, homemaker
Plano, TX

HB 2658 allows the MCO to randomly choose and or change the primary care provider based on their criteria. My child has health conditions based on which I have had to choose her doctors very carefully. She used to have a tracheostomy, on the ventilator and was on oxygen. She has a GTube for for feeding and gets speech, occupational and physical therapy in addition to applied behavioral analysis since she has autism.

The right primary care provider has been critical to my daughter staying in good health. We have had to change primary care providers including moving to a primary care provider not accepting Medicaid because she was the best choice for her. MCO's do not live our life of day in and day out medical decisions.

Just like we have to change doctors when our children's needs change, we also have to change MCOs. Especially, when we know that we are not getting the level of care that the child needs. If therapies are being denied, nursing is denied, medicines are not covered and doctors are not in network, we have to switch MCOs. And if after switching MCOs, we discover our child's needs were not made we should be able to switch back to other MCOs.

The decision should be based on our children's medical needs. I do not agree with further hurdles put into place to access the live saving healthcare.

Lauren Tucker

Self

Aubrey, TX

PLEASE VOTE AGAINST THIS BILL.
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Judy Oldham

Self

Haltom City, TX

PLEASE VOTE AGAINST THIS BILL.
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Doris Jezewski

Self

Denton, TX

Please do not support this bill. It is not good for children with special needs. Thank you.

Mariah Fusco

Self

Boyd, TX

Please vote against this bill. It will be detrimental to special needs kids and their health.

Ericka Eskam

Self

Rhome, TX

This would be detrimental to special needs children and their family. I am strongly opposed to this bill.

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Rachel Mumaw

Self, Seminary Student

Farmers Branch, TX

This bill will be incredibly detrimental to special needs children and their healthcare. Interfering with the doctor-patient relationship only causes serious harm and will lead to less quality healthcare. Please vote against this bill on behalf of all the children!

Alice Ransdell

Registered Nurse (Field) for Texas based Pediatric Home Health / Self

Hickory Creek, TX

Please vote against this bill. It will be detrimental to special needs children and their health.

Brock Bergstrand

Self

Arlington, TX

Please vote AGAINST the bill

Haylee Moore

Self

Corinth, TX

PLEASE VOTE AGAINST THIS BILL.

THIS BILL IS DETRIMENTAL TO SPECIAL NEEDS KIDS AND THEIR CONTINUITY OF CARE. IT WILL NEGATIVELY AFFECT THEIR HEALTH. VOTE NO.

Tanya Smith

Self

Little Elm, TX

Please vote against this bill. It will be detrimental to special needs kids and their health.

Tyler Medford

self

Corinth, TX

Please vote against this bill. It will be detrimental to special needs kids and their health.

Gabriel Rodriguez

Self

Denton, TX

Again

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Brody Hust
Self
Grapevine, TX

PLEASE VOTE AGAINST THIS BILL.
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Savanna Vochoska
Self
Argyle, TX

PLEASE VOTE AGAINST THIS BILL.
THIS BILL IS DETRIMENTAL TO SPECIAL NEEDS KIDS AND THEIR CONTINUITY OF CARE. IT WILL NEGATIVELY AFFECT THEIR HEALTH. VOTE NO.

Diana Evans
Self
Arlington, TX

I want to vote AGAINST this bill.

Josh Fultz
PTFK
Navasota, TX

I am opposed to this bill for our medically fragile kids. It may work well for non medically fragile kids but I would like to see help for us and not more restrictions.

Susan Murphree, Sr. Policy Specialist
Disability Rights Texas
Austin, TX

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on behalf of Disability Rights Texas (DRTx) on HB 2658 by Chairman Frank. I am Susan Murphree, Sr. Policy Specialist with DRTx. DRTx is Texas designated protection and advocacy agency. I would like to thank Chairman Frank and his staff for listening to stakeholders in considering key modifications to the bill.

In our analysis of HB 2658, Section 1 regarding capitation rates and risks adjustments for managed care organizations (MCOs) that take into account the acuity of members can have a positive impact on individuals with disabilities and the MCOs that serve more members with higher acuity.

Regarding Section 2 and network directories, while many individuals would prefer a more updated electronic version of the directory rather than a paper directory, some may not have or be able to use an electronic version of the directory. It will help those with disabilities and others to ask about the need or preference for a paper directory at enrollment on the enrollment or application form, at least annually and upon request.

Section 4 regarding assignment of a primary care provider needs further clarification and assurances that MCO members still pick their MCO and their primary care provider and that this section is about those who do not make a selection. It is critical to honor a members selection of their primary care physician and other health care providers. Since there is already a default process, this

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section may not be necessary. In addition, those with third party insurance coverage say they prefer not to select nor have a managed care primary care physician assigned since their primary care physician is through their third party coverage.

Section 5 would further restrict a member's right to change their MCO, which could have a significant and negative impact individuals with disabilities who have critical health care provider across two MCOs, but not in just one MCO. It is our understanding that the number of individuals who change MCOs is small and they do so due to an inadequate provider network and poor quality. Being able to change MCOs was one of the promises of managed care that is critical to Texans with disabilities and can be harmful if removed or further limited. Texans with disabilities should not be trapped in an MCO that is not meeting their needs.

Thank you for consideration of these comments. For more information, please contact Susan Murphree at smurphree@disabilityrightstx.org 512 913 4501 (cell).

Jennifer Riggs, Ms

Self

Waco, TX

This bill is BAD for medically fragile and special needs kids and their families. These kids require 24 hour care and this bill has the potential to hurt them and the services they depend on for quality of life and sometimes just life. No!

Lauren Cloud

Self, stay at home mom

Georgetown, TX

I am registering in opposition of this bill. As a mom of a medically fragile child, this will greatly impact the care that my child will receive and make it much more difficult.

Sara Pierce

Self

Florence, TX

I am in opposition of this house bill as it pertains to the treatment of patients and their ability to obtain appropriate medical care.

Sophia Menchaca

Self

Houston, TX

I oppose HB 2658.

Tammy Cannon

PTFK

Gainesville, TX

I am against this bill. I want my family and my loved ones to be able to decide their own medical care, doctors, make their own decisions....NOT have the government make those important decisions for them. I VOTE AGAINST THIS BILL!

Gabriela McCann

Minor child

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Bulverde, TX

I strongly oppose this bill. MCO's have only limited my child's continuity of care. It has caused disruption in nursing and therapy services. You are giving MCO's more power over our children's care. If this bill passes, this committee and the legislature will have shamefully failed to give help or relief to our fragile children and their families.

Pamela Shipley

Self

Austin, TX

I oppose this bill because it reduces patients freedom to choose which managed care organization they participate in for their Medicaid services, interferes with current definitions of continuity of care by changing how existing doctor/patient relationships are defined, and undermines legislation we got passed last session to increase oversight and patient protections.

Cindy FLEHARTY

Self, mother of medically fragile child

Leander, TX

Against! Medically fragile children need continuity of care as well as freedom to choose. Assigning providers is not in Texan's best interest.

Stephanie Brown

self

Austin, TX

I oppose this bill. After learning more about what it will mean for patients, especially medically-fragile patients, and their doctors and other medical providers, I am against this bill. The bill favors managed-care organizations and not the patient.

Ginger Mayeaux, Director of Public Policy and Advocay

The Arc of Texas

Austin, TX

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on HB2658. I am Ginger Mayeaux, the Director of Public Policy and Advocacy for The Arc of Texas. The Arc of Texas promotes, protects, and advocates for the human rights and self-determination of Texans with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

First off, we want to thank Representative Frank for his thoughtful work with stakeholders to address concerns in a committee substitute. The Arc of Texas is thankful to have played a role in the implementation of Medicaid managed care for Texans with IDD, since SB7 83(R) was passed, and will continue to advocate with and for Texans with IDD to have access to quality community supports and services in managed care or fee for service systems.

With the following revisions, The Arc of Texas can support HB2658:

- Removal of Section 4, in relation to primary care assignments; and
- Removal of Section 5, regarding an individual's ability to change managed care plans at any time.

The Arc of Texas is in support of Section 1, which allows more considerations when developing capitation rates, so Texans with disabilities can be adequately supported in the most integrated setting. In addition, we support Section 2, which removes existing requirements for managed care organizations to provide printed copies of the provider directory. Unless and individual requests a printed copy, we believe resources can be better spent maintaining an adequate directory online.

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Thank you again for the opportunity to provide comments. I look forward to continuing our work with Representative Frank and the committee moving forward.

Dayanne Siqueiros

Ptfk

Dallas, TX

Obstructs continuation of care for medically needy children and impedes their families from participating directly in their plan of care .

Kathryn Blake

Self

Plano, TX

I oppose this bill because it could limit the care my 3 year old son desperately needs. This would severely compromise his level of care and jeopardize being able to work with physicians who have known him since he was a baby and his team of doctors and medical staff are the best for him. Also we need choice and the ability to make changes when necessary. I strongly oppose this bill.

Rosanna Lynn

Self

Driftwood, TX

Against!!!

Arlenne Phillips

Parent /Medically fragile complex child

Mesquite, TX

This is a terrible Bill it would allow an MCO to change and pick all our providers, it is hard enough finding a pediatrician that will even see our medically complex child . They all rely on the specialist that know our children the best and have been taking care of them for years . This Bill will endanger our medically complex children No one should be made to do this they already have to much control over our kids . I have to pay out of pocket for a major seizure recur medication because it's not on their formulary when we have already tried the others and they either no longer work or cause very severe side effects . This is a BAD BILL. If this Bill passed I doubt that very many complex children will survive all the changes and chias this will bring to their lives and their family's lives. Don't we have a hard enough time already .

Tammy Peper

PTFK

Bellville, TX

I am strongly opposed to HB2658, it is detrimental to medically fragile children and takes away choices that may be life altering for these kids.

Jana Musgrove

self, physicist

Canutillo, TX

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I strongly oppose this bill.

Gail Castro

None

Willis, TX

I oppose this bill. Protect the rights of the medically fragile in Texas. They deserve to receive care from the doctor of their choice and to choose their managed care program based on their needs and not be randomly assigned.

Victoria Polega

Self

Austin, TX

I am opposed to this bill. Having a choice for primary care physician is essential for my child's health and continuity of care. My child is medically fragile and it is essential that you help us protect his rights and patient protections put in place last session.

Amber Weigl

Self, attorney

Austin, TX

Against.

Sara Arredondo

Self/teacher

Lometa, TX

Please vote against this bill. It will be detrimental to special needs kids and their families

Anissa Johnson, Ms

Self and family... nurse

Conroe, TX

STRONGLY DISAGREE!!!

Donna Harrell, Ms

Self Program specialist

Hempstead, TX

How dare this bill take away the right and ability to choose a specific caregiver/PCP especially for those of us with highly disabled family members that have a significant relationship with specific medical personnel that are knowledgeable of our loved ones history and needs. This is a bill from someone with no heart or understanding of the needs of others. **DO NOT PASS THIS BILL, PLEASE!!!**

Kirby Burns

Self LVN

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La Grange, TX

I strongly disagree

Shawn Coker

Self

Willis, TX

I am opposed

Jennifer Jennings, WARRIOR MOM ADVOCATE

Self, Complex medical daughter

Waxahachie, TX

The fact that this is even on the table is disgusting!!!! I AM IN COMPLETE OPPOSITION AGAINST HB2658 BILL. CONTINUITY OF CARE IS A MUST WITH OUR CHILDREN. Fighting Texas Medicaid has become a HARDSHIP for our families because we spend HOURS UPON HOURS EVERY MONTH battling denials, authorizations, calls to managed care, attempts to find GOOD providers, etc. Our medically fragile children can not be locked into a PCP or MCO that doesn't know our child or serve them with total commitment and dedication. We struggle to get decent care for our medically children in Texas with all of the hoops we must already jump through for these MCO'S. This bill will cause further delays in care, cause less GOOD PCP's to take on the work load of of more time consuming fragile children, and cause more regression in their over all health. THIS IS A TERRIBLE BILL WITH FAR REACHING CONSEQUENCES WHICH WILL CAUSE IRREVOCABLE HARM. My daughter has been with her PCP and much of her Specialists since her near death experience. She has a brain injury, a chromosome deletion, microcephaly, autism, and many complex issues not often seen in a single child. Her team has spent YEARS understanding her needs, her reactions to certain medications, her sensitivities, and her family dynamic. We've spent hours building these relationships which this bill will most certainly undo by forcing these complex kids into a MCO or PCP of medicaid choice...or worse.. some random computer software. These are complicated children who can't just pick up again without DIRE consequences. When our family moved, we spent 6 months in the process to ensure we made doctor moves that could handle her Healthcare. This bill would be TRAGIC and undo all of the safeguards we have worked so desperately to give all of our children. I am FULLY AGAINST HB2658. THIS WOULD BE ANOTHER TRAGIC MOVE WITH HARMFUL EFFECTS AGAINST TEXAS CHILDREN. It's shameful that Texas continues to profess that Texas is pro life while it makes constant and continual moves to provide subpar care in comparison to every other state. This Texas girl is sad that the state she loves so dearly is failing Texas children. I am AGAINST HB2658 and I hope our voices are heard. It's hard to submit our testimony and even harder to travel with our kids in pandemic or not. We need to be working on improving Healthcare for Texas children. HB2658 is yet another bill where Texas has more focus on money than lives! We must do better! Oppose HB2658!!!

Laura Vann

Laura Vann

Warren, TX

I strongly disagree with this bill

Maria Villanueva

elf

Bellville, TX

Strongly disagree with this bill

Elizabeth Jimenez

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Self & Protect Texas Fragile Kids

Little Elm, TX

Please think about the children. Human life & access to care before profits.

Allyssa Harrell

PTFK

Bellville, TX

This is a horrible bill and will do more harm than good

Hazel Canela

PTFK warrior

Pearland, TX

i am against/oppose this bill,just today even when this bill is not approved yet my son's mco called asking me who is his pcp(primary care provider)he had Dr Laura anderson since he was born we never changed pcp.the mco told me that it was default in their syatem.when did that happened?bec we never called them to change pcp.as a nurse myself it is important for a health provider to have consistency of care.for the pcp to know my child history esp with a child who has complex medical needs ,pcp who coordinates care with the specialists and most importantly a pcp who know what work and does not work for my child.if the mco randomly chooses my child pcp in their system these doctors does not have history with my child and would not be able to know and have a good clinical judgement.this bill will give mco power to choose my child doctor,care and services without hearing/listening and making the family an integral part of our childrens medical care

Shawn Williams

Self- parent of special needs child, speech language pathologist

Lubbock, TX

I oppose this bill! As parents we should have the right to choose our child's primary care doctor& switch MCO' .

Robin Harrell

Self

Bellville, TX

This bill will be a huge disservice to all special needs kids and families I strongly disagree with this bill

Batool Hassan

Self

Sugar Land, TX

As a mother of a medically, complex child, I strongly oppose HB2658. Please don't make our lives even harder than they are.

Melissa Marrero

Self

Rowlett, TX

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I am opposed to this bill

Kathleen Wanhanen

Self, research administrator

Flower Mound, TX

Please vote against this bill. It will be detrimental to special needs kids and their health. Thank you.

Laurie Garza

Self

Allen, TX

I oppose HB 2658!!

Raymond Mendoza

Self

Mesquite, TX

Opposed

Jose Pereida

Self / District Director

Robstown, TX

I oppose this bill as it directly ENDANGERS children in the State of Texas. Children, especially special needs children, should not be put to death by bills like this one.

Jennifer Hall

Self

Grapevine, TX

I am registering in opposition of HB2658

Ashley Moore

Self

Southlake, TX

Against

Joe Pereida

self/retired

PORTLAND, TX

I oppose this bill. I will also be contacting my State Rep. and State Sen. about this horrible bill.

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Aaron Collard

Self

Terrell, TX

Opposed. As a type 1 diabetic I do not think my insurance provider should have any say over me or my doctor on who I choose and what treatments are "appropriate". This would result in diabetics and other ill people to be turned down for certain methods of sustaining life and critical treatment.

Amy KrellerKochis

Self

Lubbock, TX

I am against this bill as it will be detrimental to my three sons with rare genetic syndromes and complex medical needs. They already have an established PCP and a plethora of specialists who are treating them & know how to care for them. Please do not pass this bill which will place many children's lives in jeopardy.

Holly Cheesborough

Self

Allen, TX

Oppose! What is the benefit for an MCO to change your PCP at random based on the MCO's criteria? This is very one-sided without thought or consideration of patient rights to choose the doctor they feel best fits their needs. A patient/provider's relationship and trust develops over years. This is a violation of patient rights. Many patients cannot find the specialists and service providers in their MCO. Limiting the ability for a patient to change MCOs limits a patient's ability to choose which plan best provides their needs and access to services, particularly in complex situations.

Stefanie Helms

PTFK

Lumberton, TX

This bill is detrimental to kids like my son that are medically fragile. No insurance should decide who the child's PCP should be. My son has been with the same PCP since he was born and the only doctor that knows my sons health and needs the best. This is the worst possible thing to do to a medically fragile child.

Belinda Sprague, Respiratory Therapist

Self/ Respiratory Therapist

Humble, TX

Voting against this bill.

Christina Garcia

Self

Corpus Christi, TX

Parents should have the right to chose which healthcare insurance their child can have and providers their child should have.

Brady Vayding

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Self / Student

Prosper, TX

PLEASE VOTE AGAINST THIS BILL.

THIS BILL IS DETRIMENTAL TO SPECIAL NEEDS KIDS AND THEIR CONTINUITY OF CARE. IT WILL NEGATIVELY AFFECT THEIR HEALTH. VOTE NO.

Jamie Pivonka

Child

Bedias, TX

Limiting anything else for our children is beyond unfair and dangerous. We have to fight tooth and nail for everything they get as it is, now you want to limit it further? Why are the most needy always the ones to suffer?

Terri Sprague

Self

Lewisville, TX

I am strongly AGAINST this Bill!!!!

Marilyn Schmiedel

Self- engineer

Pflugerville, TX

I'm against this bill. This bill locks patient's into an MCO for without the ability to switch. It's already difficult to switch MCOs with a wait of up to 45 days, and there are only two MCO choices in most areas, so this is not something that needs a bill to make it harder. Because rest assured if we need to switch MCOs, it's because our severely disabled child is not getting what she needs from her MCO. And families like my own have already gone through all the other channels and have used the complaint system before deciding the need to switch MCOs, often to keep their child out of expensive hospital stays. Being locked into a bad MCO means no one has to provide continuity of care anymore. This bill also allows MCOs to assign PCPs. No thank you.

Doris Faz

Self

Austin, TX

We should be able to choose our own providers for our child not MCO's. We know what they need and we have already established care with our providers and having someone come in and change that just because is not ok.

Ted Malkowski, Director of Medicaid affairs

Numotion

Austin, TX

Neutral on the bill.

Tanny Fernandez

Self, homemaker

Katy, TX

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Against. This is abusive and needs to stop.

Casey greathouse

Self

sour lake, TX

This bill will have a negative impact on our medically fragile community!

Hearing Date: March 23, 2021 8:00 AM

Jamie de Grasse

Self

Austin, TX

I oppose this bill. It is overreaching and takes away the very limited rights children and caretakers of disabilities have.

Mark de Grasse

Self

Austin, TX

I oppose this bill.

Patricia Firkser

“Self” full time mom

Austin, TX

I oppose HB 2658

William Firkser

“Self” System consulting

Austin, TX

I oppose HB 2658

Thank you

Elsa Kern, Ms

My daughter and other children with similar needs

Buda, TX

This bill can be deleterious to the health of the medically fragile who have established themselves with providers who can offer the best care for their needs

Ebony Brown

Self

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Celina, TX

I oppose this bill. As a mom of a special needs child, this will severely impact his access to his doctors, therapist and medical supply companies

Stephanie Paresky

Self

Richardson, TX

As the mother of a medically complex 7- year old son, I strongly oppose this bill, because it would severely limit access to our son's preferred providers and hinder access to appropriate, quality medical care.

Paige Kinkade, CEO

MedCare

Stafford, TX

I oppose this bill!

Jana Musgrove

self, Medical Physicist

Canutillo, TX

I strongly opposed this bill. Signed, mother of a disabled son in the MDCP program.

Megan Hill

Self. Parent

Harker Heights, TX

My son has had the same doctor for 16 of his 17 years. An MCO has no business being able to decide who a patient sees as a primary care. They will destroy continuity of care to save a nickel. They are already doing it with our specialists and DME companies. This madness has to stop. Our lives are such a maddening maze of red tape we need multiple layers of advocates to help us and even our case managers at the mcos don't understand all of the rules. People who have never met our children make life altering decisions about them, including you. If you change anything our nurses and attendants desperately need better pay. In the last decade pay hasn't moved. Cost of living has.

Stacy Tassin

Medically Fragile Son

Montgomery, TX

Please do not consider passing this bill into law as it continues to undermine parents/caregiver rights to seek medical treatment and care for medically fragile Texans. Managed Care (MCO) continues to not only create additional work, time, hardships, and costs for families but also for Texas. Countless hours and money have been spent on appeals and fair hearings since MCO took over program administration. It is time Texas Congress members stood up for their fragile constituents and limited the control MCO has on making medical decisions that drastically impact so many fragile Texans quality of life and overall health. Thank you for your consideration and support.

Gail Castro

None

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Willis, TX

As a parent and legal guardian of a special needs/medically fragile child, I would like to retain the right to choose a managed care provider for my adult child. I would also like to keep the doctors , both primary and specialists that my child and I have researched and who understand my child's needs and can provide quality care. Medically fragile people deserve to have a choice.

Erika Cain

Self

Pearland, TX

I oppose this bill!

Adrienne Trigg, Government Relations

Texas Medical Equipment Providers

Austin, TX

Against the Bill.

Shari Benage

Self/Home Health

Amarillo, TX

I oppose this bill!!

Sarah Washington

PTFK

Spring, TX

This bill will have negative effects on my 10 year old daughter. She has cerebral palsy and epilepsy and a number of other complex medical issues and has StarKids through the MDCP waiver. It is imperative that we can choose her doctors so that she gets the best medical care for her medical issues. The MCO's already have so much power and say in our kids' healthcare, it makes it hard to make sure our daughter gets the support and help she needs. Please do not extend the MCO reach anymore - please think of my daughter and families like ours who are already struggling to exist with the MCO structure this state has selected.

Chandra Steppy

Myself

Fort Worth, TX

I strongly oppose this bill. Our families do not need further stress placed upon us and restrictions. Thank you

Josh Fultz

Protect Texas Fragile Kids, Self

Navasota, TX

As a parent of a child with Special Needs child I am opposed to this bill.

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Holly Cheesborough

Self

Lucas, TX

Oppose! This Bill is concerning as it implies that the MCOs would gain unethical control of patients' care. It is not ok for an MCO to randomly change a patient's PCP based on their own criteria? Patients should be receiving the care they need from a dr of their choice, a dr who understands the patient and who develops the relationship, trust and connection with that patient. Why would you allow a MCO to disrupt this connection and level of care? Put yourself in this position. How would you feel if your dr was randomly changed for you?

This Bill seems to be focused on giving MCOs unnecessary control over the quality and level of care for patients. If an MCO is not meeting the needs of the patient and/or is not able to provide the in-network providers and services for a patient, the patient should have the tight to change MCOs. There seems to be an increase of MCOs limiting provider choices to and dropping contracts with providers. HHSC needs to step up and address these issues, not give MCOs additional controls as this Bill is focused on doing.

Stacy Owen

Self

Huntsville, TX

Opposed

Jessica Haynes

Special needs family

Belton, TX

Not for it at all

Jessica Coker

self

Willis, TX

As currently written, HB2658 would increase MCO capitation rates, allows managed care insurance companies (MCOs) to change and assign patients' primary care providers using their own random criteria endangering the care of medically fragile children, severely limits patients' ability to switch MCOs, and changes the definition of existing patient-provider relationship.

Pam Shipley

self

Austin, TX

I oppose HB2658 as it allows the MCO to assign PCP regardless of the prior relationship with a provider who is familiar with our children's condition(s) and unique needs. This will completely violate the rights of the fragile child to receive the best medical care from a provider who is (1) most qualified (2) continuity of care (3) relationship with medically fragile child/parent/provider. Lastly, Continuity of care provisions for SB1207 are already in place.

Madeleine Harrison

Protect Texas Fragile Kids

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Plano, TX

I oppose this bill and ask the committee to reject it. This bill would harm medically fragile children in Texas by allowing MCOs to randomly assign primary care providers, severely limiting the ability to change switch MCOs as needed, and by changing the definition of the patient-provider relationship.

Jennifer Cartwright

self

wichita falls, TX

I feel this bill will hender my options to pick my own physician for my child how has special needs due to his medical issues. It could also limit with MCO organization I want to pick and when. When dealing with a medically fragile child We build relationships with providers over year and it is not so easy to find new onws that understand our children.

Matthew Paresky

Self

Richardson, TX

As a father of a medically complex child I oppose this bill.

April Paul

Self

Conroe, TX

I strongly oppose this bill!!!

Susan Murphree

Disability Rights Texas

Austin, TX

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 2658 on behalf of Disability Rights Texas (DRTx), Texas designated protection and advocacy agency. I am Susan Murphree, Sr. Policy Specialist with DRTx.

While adjusting managed care organizations (MCOs) rates to consider acuity and the provision of home and community based long term supports and services may be beneficial to serving Texans with complex and chronic conditions and disabilities, other aspects of the bill significantly expand control of members by MCOs without consumer rights and protections.

For instance, allowing an MCO to make initial and subsequent primary care assignments and changes would be overreaching and disempowers the choice of providers by MCO members, even within network. Further, an MCO determining the "main source" of Medicaid services that may go into an MCO decision regarding provider assignment is woefully insufficient. For example, for an individual, the psychiatrist or other specialty provider may be the most important provider with whom to maintain continuity regardless of the frequency of contacts versus a primary care provider the member may see for more routine services more frequently. Main source or priority provider are not defined. In addition, members should maintain the right to change MCOs for any reason. In closing, the ways in which members lose rights and choice in HB 2658 as proposed would be incomprehensible in any patient-centered, person-centered service delivery model and likely not consistent with federal laws applying to managed care and to Medicaid in general that allow for selection of one's own health care provider within the network, and at times, outside of the MCO's network. The impact of those changes would be a detriment to Texans with disabilities served in managed care by restricting rights and choice.

For more information, please contact Susan Murphree at smurphree@disabilityrightstx.org or 512 913 4501 (cell).

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Laurie Garza

Self, mom of son with special health needs

Allen, TX

I am opposed to this Bill. Having to deal with Medicaid MCOs has been difficult and we have been denied medications and have had to fight for things that are medically necessary. This Bill would cause further problems to the health and safety of my son by limiting our rights to switch, and allowing the MCO to choose PCPs for our kids randomly. It is imperative that we are able to choose doctors that are well versed in complex health needs. Please consider the patients, our children, and their needs before the MCOs!!

Brian Broadbent

Self

Dallas, TX

I would like to voice my strong opposition to HB 2658. First, HB 2658 gives managed care organizations the unilateral right to assign a primary care provider. No one likes to be told what doctor to choose when someone might have a capable and trusted provider already. Here's a little secret as to why the MCOs want this escape clause. The MCOs do a very bad job of intaking new members. They assume that all new members do not have a primary care provider and de facto assign a new one for them. I have actually experienced this twice as a parent of a Medicaid member. No one bothered to ask if we had a doctor and if they did it was completely ignored. The MCOs intake new members and then send you paperwork welcoming you and letting you know about your new provider. Instead of dealing with their own intake mess, the MCOs just want to force feed the new members to take whatever provider is assigned to them. It's a totally ridiculous ask and completely unnecessary. Make MCOs go through the work of properly intaking new members first. Second, the language in 533.0076(c) strips Medicaid members of the rights to switch MCOs for any reason. It forces Medicaid members to become lawyers and prove that an MCO has violated federal Medicaid law in order to switch MCOs. The right for a member to switch MCOs is basically the only true club that Medicaid members possess to force MCOs to provide quality care instead of the bare minimum required by the law. HB 2658 would strip out this right to switch entirely unless we prove that the MCO is violating federal law. This statute effectively turns a competitive duopoly or triopoly system into a true monopoly system with no recourse to Medicaid members. Furthermore, HB 2658 not only takes away the right to switch but also gives the MCOs the right to select the doctors as well. I hate to make things personal, but this bill reflects a concerning pattern by Representative Frank. In the 86th session, Representative Frank tried to insert similar language into HB 4178 that took away the right to switch MCOs. Now Representative Frank is trying to add the right for the MCO to pick your primary doctor. The modus operandi here is that the Medicaid Member is the sole problem and that granting vast powers to the MCOs is the only solution. I thought Republicans were against big government mandates and believed that individuals could make rationale choices for themselves. This bill is the exact opposite of that principle. It takes away choice from consumers, hands over power to external entities, and takes away the individual right to vote for an individual MCO. This bill just hands the kitchen sink to the MCOs. In conclusion, not only do I voice strong opposition to HB 2569, I request that the Committee swiftly and boldly send this Bill to trash heap where it belongs and shift its focus to more pressing matters.

Susan Nowstsrup

self - financial planner

Austin, TX

I oppose this bill. Families should have the ability to opt out if they are not satisfied with their care. That makes for good accountability.

Carol Daley

Self Employed

Arlington, TX

I am strongly opposed to HB 2658 for a variety of reasons.

I have been a part of the Aetna StarKids MCO for several years now. Their ability to take care of my son's needs has been lackluster at best. I FREQUENTLY ultimately have to threaten to file a complaint at the state level to get anyone's attention. Families should be able to change managed care insurance companies when they cannot get their needs met with their current one.

We have spent years developing a working relationship with my son's PCP and his out-of-network extended team of doctors/specialists around the country. All of these medical personnel work in concert together, and understand my son's medical history and needs as they've been with us for years. This bill allows MCOs to change and assign PCPs using their own random criteria. This doesn't even make sense from an expense standpoint - if you change my son's PCP to another randomly-assigned one I can almost guarantee that the learning curve is going to be steep and the new person may miss things that ultimately COST THE STATE MORE MONEY.

This is a BAD BILL. As they say, "if it ain't broke, don't fix it." We don't need to "fix" this situation. MCO's will perform better if they know patients have the right to choose/switch. It's called free-market, and it works.

Gary Siller, Concerned citizen and patient advocate

Clark, Hill LLP

Houston, TX

This is a very bad bill, especially for those medically fragile Medicaid patients, and their families. Those patients and their families maintain a trust relationship with their providers. Those patients and their families know what is best for the patient as do their providers of choice. Many of these patients suffer from multiple medical conditions. Maintaining continuity of care by allowing patients to stay with their provider of choice is vital to the patients well being. If quality care is the objective, makes no sense to disrupt these relationships.

Patient Chose is what keeps the Medicaid system honest. It is the equalizer. It is the only defense that patients and their families and providers have to all powerful MCO, who care very little about quality of care. If the care provided to the patient is poor, the family in many cases can switch to a new MCO. This is a check on the MCO to maintain acceptable care, lest the patient will change.

Additionally, allowing the patient to stay with their provider of choice gives strength to the provider to demand a sustainable reimbursement rate because the provider knows the patient will move to a new provider who will provide quality care. Without it, the providers have to accept whatever rate the MCO demands even if it does not allow the provider to provide quality care. IN the end the patient suffers.

As most families of fragile children and adults will attest, their relationship with their DME for supplies and services is just as important as the relationship with the patient's doctors. Coordinated delivery of supplies and services is critical to quality care. It is the DME who is called in the middle of the night when a problem occurs, not the physician. Good DME's keep patients out of the ER and save millions of dollars. .

Robert Shipley

self

Austin, TX

I appose this bill because this severely affects our fragile children and families in that the provider that they get "assigned" to may not be the (1) provider of choice (2) most qualified (3)lacking the parent/child/provider relationship (4) disrupts continuity of care.

Adreanna Tarwater

Self

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San Antonio, TX

I am against this bill. Families should have the choice in which MCO they want and the PCMs that they choose.

Cristina Villarreal

PTFK

Rio Grande City, TX

I strongly oppose HB 2658.

I don't believe a Managed Care Organization should have control over patient care. They should not be given authority to select or reassign primary care providers or other medical providers. It will be detrimental to patient care.

Amy Molandes

Self, Stay home Mommy

LUFKIN, TX

Please support & pass this bill.

Michelle Oldham, Parent

Self/parent

Sanger, TX

I oppose this bill. As a parent to my special needs son, I should have the right to pick and keep the primary physician who has been on our team since the beginning.

Wesley Oldham, Parent

Self / Firefighter

Sanger, TX

I strongly oppose this bill. Parents know best for their special needs kids and should be able to choose and keep the physicians they feel is best for them. Same goes for what MCO they choose, or want to switch to.

Marlina Delgado

Self homemaker

League City, TX

Opposition to this bill. It takes a special needs parent a long time to find specialists for their children and when you do, you definitely don't want to lose them because the MCO decides randomly who your special needs child should see.

DONNA SHIPLEY

self/ retired

grand prairie, TX

I oppose this bill because it does not allow for change of plans, physicians, or providers if you are unhappy with any of the services.

John Culberson

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American Association for Home Care, Apple Home Care

Houston, TX

American Association for Home Care and Apple Home Care are here today to express their strong opposition to HB 2658 on behalf of themselves and the medically fragile patients and their families who we serve.

Texas' economic growth has led the nation for many years because Texas understands the power of free markets powered by consumers who are free to choose the products or services that best meet their needs with minimum interference from State or local government. Coupled with low taxes and a light regulatory touch, a Texas consumer's freedom to choose is the essential underpinning to the success of the Texas economy.

The Texas Legislature and our State leaders have enshrined this freedom to choose into State law in many important ways, and perhaps none is more important than a patient's right to be treated by the doctor of their choice. This choice preserves a fundamental freedom guaranteed to all Americans in an area that is one of our most personal and vitally important - the right to the best possible health care for ourselves and our family members.

You have wisely guaranteed a patients right to stay with the doctor of their choice both in the private arena and the public arena for Medicaid patients. Most importantly, you have guaranteed this fundamental right for the most vulnerable patients of all - medically fragile patients.

Every parent on this committee knows the depth and power of a parent's love and devotion for their children. Imagine your child was born with serious medical conditions that require constant care, or if your child developed a rare, incurable and often fatal neurological disease. Texas honors and protects life at every stage of life, and you have wisely and compassionately enacted laws that both protect life at every stage and will help protect families from bankrupting themselves protecting the lives of their children.

Texas' Medicaid system seeks to balance the best of free market forces and consumer choice with protecting taxpayers from excessive or unnecessary costs. More work needs to be done to strengthen current law which guarantees that a medically fragile Medicaid patient can stay with a doctor or specialty medical device supplier they trust, but as you debate the path forward, I would urge you to follow the oldest and most fundamental tenant of the medical profession - first, do no harm.

On behalf of the medically fragile patients and their families who we serve, we urge you to table or to drastically amend this legislation. I have provided each one of you a letter from United Health Care to a supplier of durable medical equipment that will become routine if this bill, as written, becomes law. If this bill passes, MCOs will have unhindered authority to redesign any rule in any way they wish to "narrow" their networks which means eliminating the most important patient right of all - the right to stay with the doctor or specialty provider they trust to protect their child.

Tammy Wolven

Parent of Special Needs Child speaking against 2658

Gladewater, TX

My name is Tammy Wolven, and I am the mother of a special needs child. I am against the Bill of 2658. The bill of 2658 that is being considered must not be allowed, it is very dangerous to the most vulnerable of populations, the critically ill, disabled, and special needs children. This bill if allowed to pass into law, can cost these most vulnerable crucially ill children their lives, so it must not be allowed to come into law.

The bill that is being proposed is taking the managed care organizations away from families. The state will be mandating what physicians and hospitals that a critically ill patient must see. The state would also be mandating what services, and equipment that would be given to these special needs, disabled, and critically ill patients. The parents or caregivers of these vulnerable critically ill patients would have no say in what level of care that was provided to them. If we did not want to see the chosen physician, or the chosen physician could not treat the patient we would not have a say in the care our children would receive which would be unacceptable.

As adults we have a right to choose which physicians we see, what insurance companies we use, what medical facilities, and services we receive so why should this be taken away from us as parents for our special needs, disabled, or critically ill children.

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Having the state mandate what doctor that our child sees or the care that we receive with no way to appeal that decision is a death sentence to these children.

Parents should have a choice as to which specialist that their child sees, not be mandated to see one that has no idea of a child's often rare critical care, and disorders. Also parents should not be forced to accept substandard levels of care due to state mandating who we can see for our children that are critically ill.

In closing I would like to say that this Bill of 2658 is extremely dangerous to the health and well being of these very vulnerable critically ill children. Parents should have the right to choose what is in the best interest of their child, not complete strangers for the sake of big business. No problems occurred with traditional medicaid prior to 2016. Since the state mandate of the managed care program of star kids in 2016 for these special needs children it has been a nightmare getting access to providers or services. The star kids program created problems getting access to care based solely on where you live. Now this bill is wanting to take managed care organizations away and totally give no choice to parents for their child's health care. This bill if allowed to pass will cost patients their lives. This bill must be stopped.

Thank you for your time.

Barry Michael Wolven

Parent of Special Needs Child speaking against 2658

Gladewater, TX

My name is Barry Michael Wolven, and I am the father of a special needs child. I am against the Bill of 2658. The bill of 2658 that is being considered must not be allowed, it is very dangerous to the most vulnerable of populations, the critically ill, disabled, and special needs children. This bill if allowed to pass into law, can cost these most vulnerable crucially ill children their lives, so it must not be allowed to come into law.

The bill that is being proposed is taking the managed care organizations away from families. The state will be mandating what physicians and hospitals that a critically ill patient must see. The state would also be mandating what services, and equipment that would be given to these special needs, disabled, and critically ill patients. The parents or caregivers of these vulnerable critically ill patients would have no say in what level of care that was provided to them. If we did not want to see the chosen physician, or the chosen physician could not treat the patient we would not have a say in the care our children would receive which would be unacceptable.

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Thank you for your time.

Linda Litzinger

self- public policy specialist for a non-profit

Austin, TX

NO for HB2658

Thank you for this opportunity to give input. My husband and I are parents of an adult with a disability. Our corporation was

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moved to Texas and through it we've had wonderful insurance that grandfathered in our adult with disability. My husband is also a retired Colonel from the Army National Guard, so we have TriCare. There are plenty of families who moved with corporations such as ours.

This bill is a problem because SB1207 from the 86th session reads that coordination of benefits should happen for all ages, but HHSC only did it for StarKids and not for StarPLus. So, for adults, this bill HB2658 makes Coordination of Benefits between Private and MCO even more difficult, in that the MCO will specify the primary provider (even though the MCO is second or third payee).

Therefore my request is for you to vote no for the bill. Thank you

Hannah Mehta, Executive Director

Self/ Protect TX Fragile Kids

Flower Mound, TX

Registering my opposition to the school retreat moves freedom of choice for patients to select their own providers, further restricts access to care, allows for increase of cavitation rates with absolutely no guidelines, requirements or oversight, and substantially changes The definition of existing patient provider relationship.

Wendy Carpenter

Self/ nurse

Mesquite, TX

As Star kids stands right now, our formulary rules continue to change. We are often having to not use the best choice for the complex child. To take away decisions with parents and trusted doctors could be disastrous. Parents with children with complex issues need to have a trusting relationship with their child's physician. Not all doctors are comfortable caring for their children and are not knowledgeable in their care.