

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on Public Health
For HB 1488

Compiled on: Monday, March 13, 2023 8:09 PM

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Hearing Date: March 13, 2023 9:00 AM

Modupe Idowu, MD

University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston

Houston, TX

Dear Ma/Sir,

I am writing to provide input on the bill for Health Homes for Texas Medicaid clients with sickle cell disease (SCD) to provide needed care management with support services and reduce acute care utilization associated with acute and chronic complications of SCD. Sickle cell disease causes acute and chronic complications that eventually result in multiple organ dysfunction and failure. Patients with SCD require specialized comprehensive care in order for their quality of life and survival to be positively affected. It is not unusual for a 20-year-old man with SCD to have chronic heart failure, chronic liver disease and chronic debilitating bone pain as a result of SCD. The same patient may also experience acute pain episodes every month for which he requires IV hydration and IV pain medicine. Optimally, this and other similar patients will require a group of specialists who are trained in SCD to take care of them and most importantly, we need to connect them to a health home.

One of the challenges facing the U.S. healthcare system is the inability to comprehensively serve those with relatively rare and complex disorders, particularly for those conditions that most impact communities that are historically disadvantaged and underserved. Such a condition is SCD, an inherited blood disorder that results in a lifetime of anemia, severe episodes of pain, and childhood onset of acute and chronic organ damage that progresses in adulthood, leading to premature mortality.

UT Physicians Comprehensive Sickle Cell Center provides a health home for all patients that include managed care patients with SCD. We provide primary care, hematology care, and other multispecialty care (cardiology, pulmonary, pain management) services at one site. We have behavioral health team including a psychiatrist, therapist, psychologist, case manager, community health worker, and social worker. We give intravenous infusion (IV) fluids and IV medications at our center for pain management. We have laboratory and imaging facilities including echocardiography on site. Our patients have access to newly approved sickle cell disease modifying therapies and those SCD therapies that are in clinical trials. We collaborate with specialty pharmacies, so they can better serve our patients by offering home deliveries for all of their medicines.

It is important for individuals with SCD to have access to Health Homes as it is a system that is able to provide coordinated care by knowledgeable providers who are integrating specialized and routine health care. This will help SCD patients live healthier and longer lives. Moreover, acute care utilization (emergency center and hospitalization rates) will decrease.

Sincerely, Modupe Idowu

Kay Ghahremani, CEO

Texas Association of Community Health Plans

Austin, TX

Texas Association of Community Health Plans supports HB 1488.