

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Submitted to the Committee on Health Care Reform, Select
For HB 1578
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Hearing Date: April 13, 2023 8:00 AM

Meaghan Bihun
self - non-profit education
San Antonio, TX

I am writing in support of HB 1578 proposed by Representative Allison. The average person struggles to understand basic information around their own health, allowing for misinformation and superstition to take the place of sound medical treatment, often leading to larger medical problems, widespread ignorance of community health issues, and the continued spread of illness and disease along with shortened lifespans for Texans who do not understand the information provided by their doctor, if they see one. Health literacy would greatly improve outcomes in Texas not just for an individual's own medical experience but also for communities as better support is available if the general public has a greater understanding of these concerns. This touches some of the most basic areas of public life in Texas. School classrooms experience difficulty with parents who are not informed enough regarding basic health to support the health of all students in a classroom when they receive information regarding classroom environment. Workplaces struggle to keep absenteeism low, as workers wind up out of the office in waves because basic health concerns are misunderstood or ignored. Rule-making in these environments can only go so far, basic literacy is necessary. As younger generations seek to support aging parents and family members, getting those family members to cooperate with health direction provided by professional can present barriers to relationship maintenance, often burdening the medical system with total care for those who would have otherwise had family support. Health literacy is a must - a study conducted in 2020 by United Health Group, an insurance company with a stake in reducing expenditures, showed that basic health literacy could save 1 million hospital visits and all of the associated costs. Any effort to educate Texans for their benefit and the benefit of other Texans is a commendable effort.

Ruby Ramirez
MHMST Methodist Healthcare Ministries
San Antonio, TX

This bill HB1578 is needed to help the under-served of the citizens of Texas. I vote for Bill HB 1578

Linda Hatchett, MSgt
Self
San Antonio, TX

I work in this field over 35 years and I've seen the need firsthand. Please support the healthcare literacy plan.

Kathryn LeVine, Pastor

self

San antonio, TX

Texas desperately needs this bill.

Julia Martinez

Self

Crystal City, TX

I support the HB 1578, especially as it would benefit individuals in rural Texas. It is challenging to the majority of the rural communities to access specialized care and an effort like this proposed bill will assist in enhancing the health literacy of the families. This effort will help individuals take ownership of their own health care and well being.

Mary Hill, Rph

Self

Corpus Christi, TX

As a pharmacist , and recently have had a number of health issues, I realized that communication is everything and how difficult it must be for most people to navigate the system .it's not medicine that fixes everything , it's how to use properly that gives the best outcomes. We all need help??

Melody Bergara, LVN

Vida Y Salud Health Systems, Inc.

Crystal City, TX

This will be helpful for patients.

Andrew Smith, Executive Director of Government Relations

University Health

San Antonio, TX

University Health supports HB 1578 and its intent to assist Texans to actively engage in their health care decision making. HB 1578 will enhance patient-provider communications and lead to the lowering of adverse patient outcomes and reduced costs in the healthcare system.

Heather Newell

self

San Antonio, TX

As a single mother of a child who was diagnosed with multiple mental health challenges in elementary school, I can personally attest to the frustration of trying to find and access health resources for my child. It is as if Texas deliberately makes it nearly impossible for a single parent to maintain a job while trying to navigate what few resources are available that match with insurance. I am tenacious. I am also a well-educated, well-dressed, white woman with manners and my own personal transportation whose demeanor encouraged health care professionals to be more open to explaining the system to me. If our health journey was so draining, I can understand why moms and caregivers give up and just use ERs. There are NOT enough resources for Texas children with mental health struggles. And it is far too difficult for working parents, especially single parents with no family in town, to maintain employment and navigate the health care system in Texas...especially working parents who have to use public transportation. Thank you for voting for HB 1578.

Jacqueline Pugh, MD
self, physician
San Antonio, TX

As a physician, I support HB 1578 and urge the committee to do the same. Health literacy is a crucial skill that empowers individuals to manage their health care effectively, yet many Texans face challenges navigating the healthcare system. This leads to increased costs, inefficient use of resources, and poor health outcomes. Texas must address health literacy and develop strategies to improve patient outcomes and reduce healthcare costs. 80% of Americans, including Texans, grapple with health literacy, with half of all healthcare consumers struggling to navigate the healthcare system. Low-income Texans, the elderly population, and individuals with limited educational attainment are disproportionately affected, struggling to access accurate health information, seek preventive care, and choose the appropriate level of care. Limited health literacy leads to inefficient use of preventative health care, increased healthcare industry costs, dosing errors and patient non-adherence to medications or treatments, increased emergency room visits, longer hospital stays, and higher mortality rates. Please support this bill.

Christine Bryan, VP, IT and Public Policy
Clarity Child Guidance Center
SAN ANTONIO, TX

Clarity Child Guidance Center is for HB 578. Clarity is a non-profit providing inpatient and outpatient behavioral health services to children ages 3-17. Clarity's patient census is comprised of 70% low-income, state-supported children through Medicaid, CHIP, STARHealth, STARKids and low-cost contracts with area local mental health authorities.

With complexities and rising costs in healthcare, Texans need to have the skills and knowledge to make informed decisions about their own care and treatment. Many are not aware of what a provider needs to know, nor are they clear what they need to know to make a smart healthcare choice. Often, those that do not have access to the appropriate health information are the ones that delay care toward more expensive services.

At Clarity, we include education and literacy scales as part of a child's treatment, knowing that a mental health issue may be a new experience for a parent. Understanding the impact of the mental health condition informs the parent for other pediatric issues that may arise. Having that same level of health literacy from other providers and agencies only increases the family's ability to make sensible healthcare choices to fit their values, their resources, and their overall wellbeing. On behalf of our kids and families, we respectfully ask that the committee support HB 578.

Shane Reader, Dr.
Self, Health Policy Scientist
Houston, TX

HB 1578 would be a substantial step to promote health literacy in Texas. Not only is health literacy intrinsically valuable, but equipping Texans with the knowledge to preserve their own help will decrease healthcare costs associated with unnecessary care, emergency room visits, and preventable conditions. The Texans who stand to gain the most from this legislation are the most vulnerable among us: the elderly, Texans with limited English language skills, and those with limited education. I strongly urge the committee to pass HB 1578 to protect the interests of vulnerable Texans.

Jeremy Manginell
Self
San Antonio, TX

Texas is, more than ever, desperately in need of health literacy across the entire state. Currently, Texas is the 12th worst state in obesity rate, ranked 38 in overall healthcare, and 25th in STD rate. Simply put, Texas is one of the worst states in overall healthcare and this is largely due to a lack of resources and knowledge regarding healthcare. To discontinue healthcare literacy and opt not to fund further healthcare literacy would mean to make these number far worse. I am fully in support of healthcare reform in our state and hope that others are as well. The cost to Texas taxpayers is currently \$43 billion dollars and rising, so this is a problem that impacts everyone in this state and one that could be minimized if people were more knowledgeable about way to better care for themselves in sustainable ways.

Alison Mohr Boleware, LMSW, Director of Policy

Hogg Foundation for Mental Health

Austin, TX

HB 1578 would require a study on health literacy with one focus on strategies to expand the use of plain language instructions for patients. Health literacy extends beyond just physical health, but into mental health and substance use. A statewide health coordinating council plan for health literacy would also benefit Texans with mental health and substance use needs. Evidence of increased need for mental health and substance use services continues to be heavily documented. 40.9 percent of American adults reported having at least one adverse mental/behavioral health consequence resulting from the pandemic. In most pre-COVID analyses that number was typically reported as being between 20 – 25 percent. However, many Texans do not know how to access timely care or that recovery is possible. Health literacy is one approach to ensure Texans know more about their mental health and substance use needs, how to care for themselves, and to work toward recovery. HB 1578 would ensure Texans know more about their physical and mental health, for better overall well-being and health outcomes.

JOHN HORNBEAK, LFACHE

SELF, retired healthcare administrator

SAN ANTONIO, TX

Health Literacy is the vital ability to understand one's health status, diagnoses and treatment plans. We spend 18% of the GDP on health-CARE but the effectiveness of those expenditures is hampered by inadequate health literacy. There are best demonstrated practices that improve health literacy in populations, demographic groups and individual patients, which results in better adherence to optimal treatment, health promotion and illness prevention. In the chronic disease dominated world of the 21st Century, such literacy achieved adherence extends over years, decades and lifetimes, resulting in not only better population health, but also economic productivity and lower health costs per capita. Texas has the resources and leaders to make significant progress and directing the SHCC to develop a long-range plan is a vital first step. Please support Rep. Allison's bill 1578. Thank you for all you do for Texas! JOHN HORNBEAK

Elsa Sixtos, MS.

Self

San Antonio, TX

I need health Insurance