



Texas Association of Health Plans
1001 Congress Ave., Suite 300
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April 17, 2023

Dear Chair Klick and Members of the House Public Health Committee,

Re: Oppose HB 2553

As the statewide trade association representing health insurers, HMOs, Medicaid managed care, and other health plans that serve over 20 million Texans, the Texas Association of Health Plans (TAHP) is committed to ensuring that Texas families and employers have access to affordable, comprehensive, and high-quality coverage.

Following the passage of HB 29 (86th), physical therapists now have direct access to treat patients for 10 or 15 days without a licensure requirement to obtain a physician referral. TAHP is concerned that PTs are taking advantage of this new law to dramatically increase the number of physical therapy visits that can be achieved in the short time frame without a physician referral. PTs have admitted in testimony that the direct access law change now accounts for 50% of their practice revenue.

Further, **TAHP is concerned about claims from physical therapists that HB 29 increased their scope of practice to now be primary care providers and are now arguing for a mandate that they be covered in health plans as if they are primary care physicians.** Primary care copays are typically lower as a means to encourage patients to seek primary care and in recognition that primary care providers provide a crucial role in health care by coordinating patient care.

PTs are not primary care providers and are not licensed or trained to provide the services of primary care providers. When SB 29 was originally passed, stakeholders all agreed that the law did not increase the scope of practice for PTs and would not change coverage of services. PTs are now breaking that agreement and arguing that SB 29 did change their scope of practice to become primary care providers and asking for insurance coverage to reflect that scope of practice change.

TAHP opposes further removing licensure requirements to skip physician involvement in patient care. When combined with a new copay cap in separate legislation, HB 2553 will open patients up to inappropriate treatment and allow benefit design that [research shows increases primary](#)



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[care copays](#). We caution against further allowing physical therapists to have direct patient access given the industry's combined efforts and the detrimental impact to low-cost primary care access.

Sincerely,

M. Blake Hutson

Blake Hutson

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