



Texas Association of Health Plans
1001 Congress Ave., Suite 300
Austin, Texas 78701
P: 512.476.2091
www.tahp.org

April 19, 2023

Re: Support SB 1695

Dear Chairwoman Kolkhorst and Members of Senate Health and Human Services,

The Texas Association of Health Plans (TAHP) is the statewide trade association representing health insurers, HMOs, Medicaid managed care, and other health plans that serve over 20 million Texans. We support SB 1695, which can permanently address state workforce challenges at the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) and help Texans who lack access to or are unfamiliar with the Medicaid renewal verification process.

On March 31, continuous eligibility for families enrolled in Medicaid during the COVID-19 pandemic ended nationwide. Consequently, the requirement that Medicaid recipients remain covered by the program regardless of a change in eligibility also ceased. States now have 12 months to determine the eligibility of every person enrolled in Medicaid. Approximately 6 million Texans must undergo this redetermination process, posing a significant challenge to our already strained state eligibility offices.

To help, Texas Medicaid managed care organizations (MCOs) and HHSC created a new partnership. The Case Assistance Affiliate program was established in 2022 as a way for MCOs to support the state's extensive eligibility redetermination efforts as a part of the unwinding of continuous eligibility.

However, this program is temporary. SB 1695 makes the Case Assistance Affiliate program permanent. TAHP supports the long term continuation of this partnership.

Under this proposal, Texas will continue this partnership and allow MCOs to help with certain parts of the eligibility process, both creating efficiencies and taking strain off of our state's programs and workforce. Stakeholders have a shared goal in redeterminations—avoiding millions of Texan children getting caught in a bureaucratic backlog that could leave families



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frustrated and kids without access to care. Together, HHSC and MCOs are proactively working to mitigate these issues.

The new Case Assistance Affiliate program is an enhanced version of the existing [Community Partner Program](#), which connects Texans applying for benefits with community-based organizations that can assist with the application. The Case Assistance Affiliate program allows MCOs to help their existing Medicaid enrollees with the eligibility process, either online or in person—at no cost to the state.

MCOs are already contractually obligated to provide renewal assistance to members whose Medicaid benefits are about to expire. However, prior to the Case Assistance Affiliate program, that assistance was limited. Now, through an agreement with HHSC, MCOs have access to additional tools to help enrollees navigate the renewal process. This arrangement operates in two ways: a member can call their MCO and request assistance with a password reset or help updating their contact information on the [YourTexasBenefits.com](#) website. MCOs can also proactively reach out to enrollees whose eligibility is set to expire the following month, assist with their redetermination application, and help upload financial documents. This can be conducted in-person or virtually.

While the unwinding of the public health emergency has just begun, the Case Assistance affiliate program has already proven to be an effective tool that improves an MCOs' ability to conduct outreach and assistance, and ultimately, help Texans maintain health insurance coverage—including facilitating transitions to the Marketplace. We appreciate your thoughtful consideration for SB 1695.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jamie Dudensing". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jamie Dudensing, RN

CEO

Texas Association of Health Plans