



**Texas Association of Health Plans**

1001 Congress Ave., Suite 300

Austin, Texas 78701

P: 512.476.2091

www.tahp.org

*October 4, 2024*

HHSC Vendor Drug Program,

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. We are writing today to commend HHSC on the draft rules for Title 1, TAC Chapter 354, regarding prior authorization criteria for exceptions to the preferred drug list as implemented by HB 3286. The rules provide essential patient protections that aim to reduce denials and enhance access to necessary medications for Medicaid patients, making a meaningful step towards better health care outcomes.

HB 3286 introduces a set of comprehensive patient protections that address common barriers to accessing prescribed drugs. These new rules ensure that patients face fewer denials and gain greater access to covered medications, creating a more fair, patient-centered approach. By adopting rules more similar to the exception processes used in the private health insurance market, HB 3286 offers Medicaid patients protections that reflect their clinical needs.

Specifically, we appreciate that the rules clearly identify exceptions for patients to maintain access to medications that are working for them if:

- The drug required is contraindicated
- The patient is stable on another mental health drug received upon hospital discharge
- The patient has tried and failed the drug
- The drug is experiencing a shortage

These protections will help ensure that patients receive the most appropriate care for their individual circumstances, supporting continuity and effectiveness in treatment. Additionally, clearly listing the detailed exception criteria in the PDL criteria guide will ensure providers are aware of the mechanisms to give patients access to the medications they need.



**Texas Association of Health Plans**

1001 Congress Ave., Suite 300  
Austin, Texas 78701  
P: 512.476.2091  
[www.taahp.org](http://www.taahp.org)

We commend HHSC for its commitment to protecting patient access and addressing critical gaps in the Medicaid system. These rules will undoubtedly help Medicaid recipients access timely and effective treatment, leading to improved health outcomes across the state.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this proposal. Please contact us if you have any questions or concerns.

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