



April 29, 2020

The Honorable Steve Allison  
State Representative  
State Capitol Extension, Room E1.512  
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Representative Allison:

Thank you for your letter regarding Medicaid reimbursement rates for emergency medical services (EMS) and the impact the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is having on the cost of delivering care in Medicaid. The Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) is committed to working with all providers who deliver critical medically necessary care to Medicaid enrolled persons.

HHSC has an obligation to ensure that Texans in the Medicaid program continue to receive access to necessary medical and habilitative services and are not negatively impacted by COVID-19. HHSC has received information about costs being incurred by providers directly and indirectly to support clients due to COVID-19. Additionally, HHSC has heard from several providers who are experiencing unusual utilization patterns that are resulting in lost revenues. HHSC continues to examine this information and hold discussions with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to determine how state relief solutions can complement relief opportunities that are being provided from our federal partners directly to healthcare providers.

On April 15, 2020, HHSC submitted a formal request to the Legislative Budget Board to authorize temporary increases to reimbursement rates. The proposed reimbursement rate increases span multiple provider types and programs, including EMS providers. These changes would allow EMS providers to treat persons in place for issues within the scope of practice of the EMS provider and receive reimbursement without transporting patients to the hospital. This should also hopefully reduce unnecessary emergency room visits.

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The proposed effective date is April 1, 2020. The federal authorization pursued to implement these rate adjustments will automatically expire with the conclusion of the emergency period. HHSC anticipates subsequent requests for additional services and provider types, as we are able to obtain additional federal guidance and develop reimbursement rates based on this guidance.

Please let us know if you have any questions or need additional information. Amanda Martin, Director of Government and Stakeholder Relations, serves as the lead staff on this matter and she can be reached by telephone at (737) 203-7786 or by email at [amanda.martin04@hhsc.state.tx.us](mailto:amanda.martin04@hhsc.state.tx.us).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Phil Wilson". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Phil Wilson