



# CITY OF HOUSTON

**Sylvester Turner**

Mayor

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December 18, 2020

Executive Commissioner Cecile Young  
Texas Health and Human Services Commission  
4900 N. Lamar Boulevard  
Austin, TX 78751  
P.O. Box 13247

Dear Executive Commissioner Young,

As Mayor of the largest city in Texas, I urge you to continue allowing Planned Parenthood to remain a provider in the Medicaid program, or at the very least, delay implementation of this decision for 180 days. Texas is in the grips of a global pandemic. It is already difficult for Medicaid patients to find providers to serve their needs. Removing a provider for purely ideological reasons will strain the remaining providers and push them to the breaking point.

There are 12,000 Texans who are going to lose access to their preferred health care provider during a global pandemic. Taking lifesaving services away like breast and cervical cancer screenings, HIV tests, STD treatment and birth control will have cause grave harm to people who are already most vulnerable. Planned Parenthood Gulf Coast is the second largest safety-net provider in Harris County, and without it, people will be left without the essential health care they need. It will push those people onto other providers who are already overwhelmed by the COVID-19 crisis.

Thanks to the low reimbursement rates and burdensome reimbursement policies, Texas suffers from a shortage of willing Medicaid providers. Less than half of Texas physicians currently provide care to Medicaid patients and only 34 percent of physicians were willing to take on new Medicaid patients, according to the Texas Medical Association. It was a challenge for Medicaid patients to get an appointment for medical services even before Texas was hit by the pandemic.

The State of Texas has some of the most stringent Medicaid requirements in the country. Texas Medicaid patients are an especially vulnerable population who already face severe obstacles in accessing health care. I urge you to reconsider this misguided decision and keep Planned Parenthood as a willing Medicaid provider to these underserved communities.

Sincerely,

Sylvester Turner  
Mayor