



# The Senate of The State of Texas

## Senator José Menéndez

District 26

December 13, 2016

The Honorable Greg Abbott  
Governor of Texas  
P.O. Box 12428  
Austin, TX 78701

Dear Governor Abbott:

Thank you for your continued service to the state of Texas. Your passion for this state is evident in your leadership. I know you care deeply for our most vulnerable population which is why I am writing to you today. Our state's most defenseless children - those on Medicaid and with special needs - are at tremendous risk of losing lifesaving medical services.

Today, the Health and Human Services Commission will implement dramatic reductions to the fee-for-service reimbursement rates for Physical, Occupational, and Speech Therapy. These cuts will force many children with disabilities to lose access to their therapists and critical services they need to live. For over a year, I have been working with my constituents to delay these cuts because of the negative consequences. Those efforts have not been successful, which is why I'm writing to you. Please take a principled stand on behalf of our vulnerable children. Governor, you have the power to delay the implementation of these harmful cuts. Please instruct Commissioner Charles Smith not to move forward until the legislature can weigh the consequences and impacts these cuts will have. The next session is less than a month away. Moreover, Speaker Straus has already indicated he will work to restore funding. These cuts are not needed.

The legislature instructed the Health and Human Services Commission in Rider 50 not to reduce rates if it jeopardizes network adequacy. The change will force many children with disabilities to lose access to their therapists and the critical services they need to live. This is already the reality in the Early Childhood Intervention program which lost funding and saw medical providers close their doors. My office has received similar concerns in Medicaid managed care. Many managed care organizations, like Superior HealthPlan, unilaterally cut reimbursement rates. As a result of these changes, multiple doctors and therapists are no longer seeing children on Medicaid. Families have lost their pediatricians.

As elected leaders, we have a moral obligation to care for these vulnerable children. The cuts will damage their medical care and livelihood. All Texas children deserve a fair shot at life and to live it with dignity. Please delay the execution of these harmful cuts. I am happy to discuss this issue with you further. Please contact me if you have any questions or if I may be of service in anyway.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "José Menéndez".

Senator José Menéndez  
The 26th District of Texas

cc: Executive Commissioner Charles Smith, Texas Health and Human Services

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