RYAN GUILLEN

TEXAS STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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GUILLEN CALLS FOR EXAMINATION OF THERAPY RATE REDUCTIONS

AUSTIN - State Representative Ryan Guillen (D - District 31) is deeply disappointed with the decision to move forward with planned cuts for pediatric therapy services provided to children with disabilities.

"It's abhorrent and unacceptable that essential services for our special needs kids would be put in jeopardy," said Guillen. "These reductions have the potential to restrict access to medically necessary therapy services for 60,000 severely disabled pediatric patients."

Guillen, as well as each of the other 49 Texas House Democrats, have responded to the recent court ruling by sending a letter to the acting administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), requesting that CMS reviews the proposed rate reductions carefully to ensure that the proposal does not restrict access to medically necessary therapy services.

A 2015 legislative rider directed the Texas Health and Human Services Commission to cut $350 million in care therapy services through rate reductions and policy changes. The cuts were originally scheduled to go into effect September 1, but were delayed due to a suit filed by in-home therapy providers which was concluded in April. The change in rates is currently scheduled to take place July 15th.

Simultaneously, discussions have arisen regarding Texas' denial of Medicaid coverage for Applied Behavior Analysis, or ABA. ABA is a resource intensive therapy and sometimes recommended for children diagnosed with autism. The therapy is currently not covered under the Texas Medicaid program, causing many families to struggle to cover payments. The difficulties for these families are compounded further by the looming rate reductions.

"It has become clear that our Republican state leaders are unwilling to stand up for disabled children, added Guillen. "House Democrats are united in doing so, and urge the federal government to ensure continued access to these vital services."

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