



September 1st, 2026

Chairman Frank and Members
House Select Committee on Health Care Affordability
Texas House of Representatives

RE: Written Testimony on Consumer Engagement – Cost and Quality

Chairman Frank and Members of the Select Committee on Health Care Affordability:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony regarding consumer engagement with health care cost and quality information.

Texas has made important progress toward greater health care price transparency. The 89th Legislature continued that work with SB 331, expanding price-disclosure requirements beyond hospitals to additional health care facilities. These efforts recognize a basic principle: Texans should know what health care costs before they purchase it.

But transparency alone is not enough.

Price information becomes most valuable when consumers have both the freedom and the financial incentive to act on it. If a patient learns that one provider offers the same service for substantially less but an insurer's network, benefit design, or contractual arrangement effectively prevents the patient from choosing that provider, transparency has identified the problem without empowering the consumer to solve it.

Texas should therefore move beyond simply publishing prices and focus on making health care information actionable. Patients should be able to easily compare meaningful prices, including expected out-of-pocket costs, rather than navigating confusing chargemaster prices or estimates that bear little relationship to what they ultimately pay. Providers should also be free to inform patients when a direct-pay or cash price is less expensive than using insurance.

Consumers should likewise benefit financially when they choose lower-cost, high-quality care. Health plans should have flexibility to create incentives that allow patients to share in savings generated by shopping for better value rather than treating savings as benefiting only the third-party payer.

Most importantly, transparency must be accompanied by competition. Knowing the price of care provides little benefit when patients have only one practical option. Texas should continue removing regulatory and contractual barriers that restrict provider choice, discourage direct-pay arrangements, or prevent new competitors from entering health care markets.

Quality information should follow the same principle. Texans need understandable information that helps them evaluate outcomes and value, not simply additional government reporting requirements that increase administrative costs without meaningfully informing patients.

The goal should not be transparency for transparency's sake. The goal should be an environment in which informed Texans can compare their options, choose the providers and services that offer them the greatest value, and benefit from making cost-conscious decisions.

An informed patient is important. An informed patient empowered to choose is far more powerful.

Thank you for your consideration.

For Liberty, For Texas!

Jeremy D. Kitchen
President | Texas Policy Research Action (TPRA)