

PALESTINE HERALD-PRESS

[Letter to the Editor: Texas is Leading the Way to Protect Cancer Patients](#)

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Shail Dalal, MD

Last year, the Texas Legislature took important steps to improve access to life-saving treatments for cancer patients. By enacting HB 1647, Texas lawmakers have prohibited insurers and Pharmacy Benefit Managers from enforcing harmful “white bagging” policies on cancer patients and other Texans with chronic, complex, rare or life-threatening diseases.

White bagging limits patient access to medicines by requiring patients to access critical medications and treatments through their insurer’s own specialty pharmacies. For too long, white bagging has restricted Texas oncologists from making more precise day-of dose changes to chemotherapy patients, even if the medication was available in their on-site, integrated pharmacy – forcing patients to delay treatment, schedule new appointments, and wait for the correct dose to be re-prepared and shipped by the insurer or PBM.

With the passage of HB 1647, patients with cancer and a range of other conditions can now access tailored care with fewer delays and lower costs. This is a big win for patients across Texas. As a practicing oncologist for 20 years, I thank Representative Cody Harris for championing this critical patient protection law that will improve cancer care, while demonstrating to the rest of the country how to create policy that restricts insurers and PBMs from putting profits over patients.