

#### **Audit Report**

# Managed Care Pharmacy Encounters Paid to Texas Children's Hospital-Specialty Pharmacy

A Managed Care Network Provider Contracted
Under UnitedHealthcare Community Plan
of Texas, L.L.C. and UnitedHealthcare
Insurance Company, Inc.



August 8, 2023 OIG Report No. AUD-23-020



# Managed Care Pharmacy Encounters Paid to Texas Children's Hospital-Specialty Pharmacy

A Managed Care Network Provider Contracted Under UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of Texas, L.L.C. and UnitedHealthcare Insurance Company, Inc.

#### Results in Brief

#### Why OIG Conducted This Audit

The Texas Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Inspector General (OIG) Audit and Inspections Division (OIG Audit) conducted an audit of managed care encounters paid to Texas Children's Hospital–Specialty Pharmacy (TCH–SP) for prescriptions dispensed to UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of Texas, L.L.C and UnitedHealthcare Insurance Company, Inc. (UnitedHealthcare) members. Pharmacy audits are conducted to verify that Medicaid members have access to vital medications in accordance with contractual, state, and federal requirements.

During the audit scope, which covered the period from September 1, 2017, through August 31, 2022, TCH–SP was paid \$15.4 million for 20,205 Texas Medicaid managed care encounters for prescriptions dispensed to UnitedHealthcare members.

#### **Summary of Review**

The audit objective was to determine whether TCH–SP (a) properly billed for selected paid encounters associated with Texas Medicaid members enrolled with UnitedHealthcare and (b) complied with applicable contractual, state, and federal requirements.

The audit scope covered the period from September 1, 2017, through August 31, 2022.

#### **Management Response**

TCH–SP agreed with the audit recommendations and indicated corrective actions had been fully implemented.

For more information, contact: OIGAuditReports@hhs.texas.gov

#### Conclusion

Texas Children's Hospital–Specialty Pharmacy (TCH–SP) properly billed for paid pharmacy encounters and complied with applicable contractual, Texas Administrative Code, and federal requirements for most encounters tested; however, TCH–SP did not consistently comply with certain requirements for medication dispensing and accurate claims submission.

#### **Key Results**

TCH–SP did not consistently comply with some requirements for medication dispensing and claims submission. Specifically:

- For 118 of 120 encounters tested, TCH-SP dispensed prescribed medication as required. However, (a) TCH-SP submitted one claim with a dispensed quantity of 90 mL when the prescription was written with a quantity of 150 mL and (b) a second claim's dispensing label indicated a 30 days' supply when the prescribed days' supply was 25 days.
- For 44 of 120 encounters tested, the number of authorized refills on the prescription did not match the number of refills authorized on the encounter.

#### Recommendations

TCH-SP should:

- Dispense prescriptions in quantities that align with the prescribed quantity.
- Print dispensing labels with the correct days' supply based on the prescribed dispensing instructions.
- Verify that the authorized refills it submits for each pharmacy claim are complete and accurate.

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#### **Audit Overview**

#### **Overall Conclusion**

Texas Children's Hospital–Specialty Pharmacy (TCH–SP) properly billed for paid pharmacy encounters<sup>1</sup> and complied with applicable contractual, Texas Administrative Code, and federal requirements for most encounters tested; however, TCH–SP did not consistently comply with certain requirements for medication dispensing and accurate claims submission.<sup>2</sup>

#### **Key Audit Results**

TCH-SP properly billed for all 120 pharmacy encounters tested and complied with other requirements for dispensing medications, such as (a) providing the correct type and strength

#### Objective

The audit objective was to determine whether TCH–SP (a) properly billed for selected paid encounters associated with Texas Medicaid members enrolled with UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of Texas, L.L.C. and UnitedHealthcare Insurance Company, Inc. (UnitedHealthcare) and (b) complied with applicable contractual, state, and federal requirements.

#### Scope

The audit scope covered the period from September 1, 2017, through August 31, 2022.

of medication with accurate dosage directions, (b) obtaining delivery confirmations, and (c) verifying dispensed prescriptions through a TCH–SP pharmacist. However, TCH–SP did not consistently comply with some requirements for medication dispensing and claims submission. Specifically:

 For 118 of 120 encounters tested, TCH-SP dispensed prescribed medication as required. However, (a) TCH-SP submitted one claim with a dispensed quantity of 90 mL when the prescription was written with a quantity of 150 mL and (b) a second claim's dispensing label indicated a 30 days' supply when the prescribed days' supply was 25 days.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Pharmacy encounters are detailed records about individual services delivered by a pharmacy for any capitated services provided to an eligible member. The data is submitted to the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) by the managed care organization (MCO).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> In the context of this report, TCH–SP submits claims, which are the basis of encounters submitted to HHSC by UnitedHealthcare, an MCO.

 For 44 of 120 encounters tested, the number of authorized refills on the prescription did not match the number of refills authorized on the encounter.

The Texas Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Inspector General (OIG) Audit and Inspections Division (OIG Audit) offered recommendations to TCH–SP, which, if implemented, will help improve encounter submission accuracy and compliance with contractual, Texas Administrative Code, and federal requirements.

#### What Prompted This Audit

Pharmacy audits are conducted to verify that Medicaid members have access to vital medications in accordance with contractual, state, and federal requirements.

The "Detailed Audit Results" section of this report presents additional information about the audit results and is considered written education in accordance with Texas Administrative Code.<sup>3</sup> In addition, other audit issues identified in this report may be subject to liquidated damages or OIG administrative enforcement measures,<sup>4</sup> including administrative penalties.<sup>5</sup>

OIG Audit communicated other, less significant issues to TCH–SP in a separate written communication.

OIG Audit presented preliminary audit results, issues, and recommendations to TCH–SP in a draft report dated July 19, 2023. TCH–SP agreed with the audit recommendations and indicated corrective actions had been fully implemented. TCH–SP's management responses are included in the report following each recommendation.

OIG Audit recognizes the unique challenges that TCH–SP faced as a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency, which was present during the audit scope period. OIG Audit thanks management and staff at TCH–SP for their cooperation and assistance during this audit.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> 1 Tex. Admin. Code § 371.1701 (May 1, 2016).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> 1 Tex. Admin. Code § 371.1603 (May 20, 2020).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Tex. Hum. Res. Code § 32.039 (Apr. 2, 2015).

#### **Key Program Data**

TCH–SP is a community-based managed care network provider specialty pharmacy located in Houston, Texas, and contracted under UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of Texas, L.L.C. and UnitedHealthcare Insurance Company, Inc. (UnitedHealthcare),<sup>6</sup> both of which are affiliate managed care organizations (MCOs).<sup>7</sup> UnitedHealthcare contracts with OptumRx, Inc. (OptumRx) for pharmacy benefit manager (PBM) services to process outpatient pharmacy claims for UnitedHealthcare members. TCH–SP also contracts with AlignRx,<sup>8</sup> a pharmacy services administrative organization (PSAO) that provides contract management and pharmacy services to TCH–SP.

Figure 1 on the following page illustrates the business relationships involved in delivering managed care pharmacy benefits to UnitedHealthcare's Texas Medicaid members whose prescriptions were dispensed by TCH–SP.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of Texas, L.L.C. is the UnitedHealthcare affiliate managed care organization responsible for compliance with the Uniform Managed Care Contract and responsible for the Texas Medicaid STAR and STAR+PLUS programs. UnitedHealthcare Insurance Company, Inc. is the UnitedHealthcare affiliate MCO responsible for compliance with the STAR Kids Managed Care Contract. For the purposes of this report, UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of Texas, L.L.C. and UnitedHealthcare Insurance Company, Inc. are referenced together with the combined abbreviation "UnitedHealthcare."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> An MCO is an organization that delivers and manages health care services under a risk-based arrangement. The MCO receives a monthly premium or capitation payment for each managed care member enrolled, based on a projection of what health care for the typical individual would cost.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> During the audit period, TCH–SP utilized the services of three different PSAOs: Community Independent Pharmacy Network (CIPN), during the period from September 1, 2017, through September 30, 2019; Pharmacy Providers of Oklahoma, Inc. (PPOk), during the period from October 1, 2019, through July 31, 2021; and AlignRx, beginning on August 1, 2021.

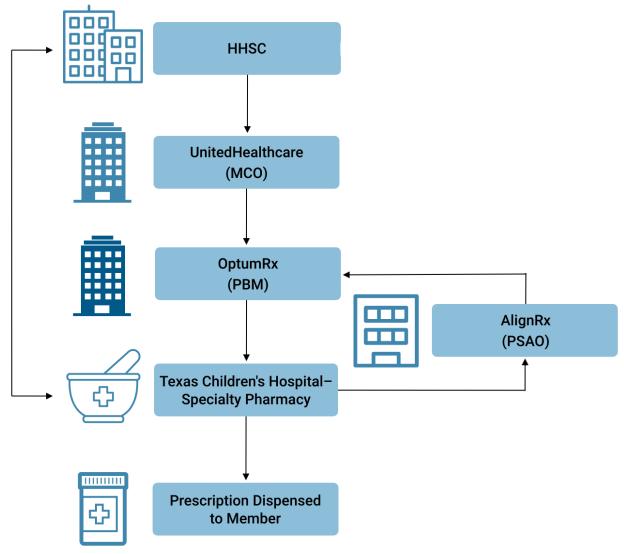


Figure 1: Pharmacy Benefit Delivery Process Through TCH-SP as of August 31, 2022

Source: OIG Audit

Pharmacy providers must enroll with the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) before providing outpatient prescription services and participating in any managed care network. MCOs must allow any Medicaid-enrolled pharmacy provider willing to accept the terms and conditions of the MCO or PBM contract to enroll in the network.<sup>9,10</sup>

During the audit scope, which covered the period from September 1, 2017, through August 31, 2022, TCH–SP was paid \$15,448,565.78 for 20,205 Texas Medicaid managed care encounters for prescriptions dispensed to UnitedHealthcare members.

#### **Auditing Standards**

#### **Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards**

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> 1 Tex. Admin. Code §§ 353.905(d) (Sept. 1, 2013) and 353.909(a) (Sept. 1, 2014).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Texas Vendor Drug Program Pharmacy Provider Procedure Manual, § P-3, https://www.txvendordrug.com/about/manuals/pharmacy-provider-procedure-manual/p-3-enrollment (accessed June 13, 2023).

#### **Detailed Audit Results**

OIG Audit reviewed 120 pharmacy refill encounters with dates of service from September 1, 2017, through August 31, 2022. Overall, TCH–SP dispensed 118 of the 120 pharmacy refill encounters tested accurately.

Additionally, for all 120 encounters, TCH–SP met timing requirements related to filling the prescriptions associated with those encounters. Specifically, for those prescriptions, TCH–SP filled the prescriptions within the correct amount of time and not earlier than allowed based on 75 percent usage and the previous fill date. All 66 unique prescribers identified in the 120 pharmacy encounters tested were not excluded <sup>11</sup> from Texas HHS Medicaid.

However, TCH–SP did not consistently comply with certain requirements for medication dispensing and accurate claims submission. The following sections of this report provide additional detail about the findings of noncompliance identified by OIG Audit.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Exclusions involve the suspension of a provider or any person from being authorized under the Medicaid program to request reimbursement of items or services furnished by that specific provider.

#### **Pharmacy Encounters**

For the 120 pharmacy encounters tested, OIG Audit (a) compared the prescriber's original prescriptions with the medication dispensing labels to determine whether TCH–SP's submitted pharmacy claim data was accurate and (b) compared the refills remaining on the dispensing label to the total authorized refills on the prescription to determine whether the information was accurate.

Pharmacies dispensing prescriptions to Texas Medicaid members are responsible for (a) dispensing prescriptions accurately <sup>12</sup> and (b) submitting claims accurately and completely. <sup>13</sup> Table 1 summarizes the number of errors identified by finding type.

Table 1: Summary of Errors by Finding Type

Finding Type	Number of Encounters with Errors
Dispensed quantity error	1
Dispensing label error	1
Data submission errors	44
Total	46

Source: OIG Audit

<sup>12</sup> 22 Tex. Admin. Code §§ 291.32(c)(1)(F) (Dec. 6, 2015, through Dec. 10, 2020) and 291.34(b)(8)(A) (Dec. 19, 2016, through Mar. 15, 2022).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> OptumRx Pharmacy Provider Manual, "General Process" (2017 through 2022).

# Chapter 1: TCH-SP Accurately Dispensed Prescriptions with Two Exceptions

TCH–SP consistently dispensed prescriptions accurately. For 118 of 120 (98.3 percent) submitted pharmacy encounters tested, TCH–SP accurately submitted the (a) member information; (b) dispensed medication name, strength, and quantity; and (c) prescriber information. However, 2 of 120 (1.7 percent) pharmacy encounters tested involved dispensed quantity or dispensing label errors. Specifically, TCH–SP submitted:

- One claim with a dispensed quantity that did not align with the prescribed quantity. TCH-SP dispensed the prescription at 90 mL while the quantity prescribed was 150 mL.
- A second claim with a dispensing label that indicated a days' supply that did not align with the prescribed days' supply. TCH–SP correctly dispensed the prescription at 225 mL, which provided a 25-day supply based on the dosage directions; however, the submitted claim and the dispensing label indicated a 30-day supply.

When a prescription is dispensed to a member at a quantity that does not align with the quantity prescribed, the member may (a) experience adverse health effects or (b) require more frequent refills than the prescriber intended and earlier refills than the member anticipated. Additionally, when a dispensing label contains an incorrect days' supply, the pharmacy might submit each associated refill for payment too soon, which may cause a denial of the refill and a delay in receiving needed medication for the member.

#### **Recommendation 1a**

TCH–SP should dispense prescriptions in quantities that align with the prescribed quantity.

#### Management Response

#### **Action Plan**

Texas Children's Hospital agrees with the OIG findings. The medication name, strength, dosage instructions, and provider name provided were correct as prescribed in the original prescription. However, the dispense volume was

adjusted resulting in less dispensed to the patient. The patient was appropriately charged for the quantity dispensed. For the follow-up to this finding, the pharmacy team was re-educated on July 28, 2023, to ensure dispense volumes match the original prescription. Additionally, on July 28, 2023, pharmacy leadership began performing internal audits for quality control. Ongoing internal quality control will be maintained through a newly implemented role of a Pharmacy Claims Auditor position. Deficiencies will be reported to the pharmacy team and quarterly committee meetings.

#### **Responsible Manager**

**Director of Specialty Pharmacy** 

#### **Target Implementation Date**

Implemented July 28, 2023

#### **Recommendation 1b**

TCH-SP should print dispensing labels with the correct days' supply based on the prescribed dispensing instructions.

#### **Management Response**

#### **Action Plan**

Texas Children's Hospital agrees with the OIG findings. The medication name, strength, quantity, dosage instructions, and provider name provided were correct as prescribed in the original prescription. However, the days' supply was inadvertently entered incorrectly. According to the refill history, the patient received subsequent refills without missing therapy. For the follow-up to this finding, the pharmacy team was re-educated on July 28, 2023, to ensure dispensed days' supply matches the original prescription. Additionally, on July 28, 2023, pharmacy leadership began performing internal audits for quality control. Ongoing internal quality control will be maintained through a newly implemented role of a Pharmacy Claims Auditor position. Deficiencies will be reported to the pharmacy team and quarterly committee meetings.

#### **Responsible Manager**

**Director of Specialty Pharmacy** 

#### **Target Implementation Date**

Implemented July 28, 2023

## Chapter 2: TCH-SP Did Not Always Meet Pharmacy Claim Submission Requirements

TCH–SP submitted 44 of 120 (36.7 percent) pharmacy encounters tested with data submission errors due to system failure. For these encounters, the number of authorized refills in the encounter data did not match the number of authorized refills on the prescription.

TCH–SP asserted that a June 2021 software update dropped the authorized refill field for each claim TCH–SP submitted to OptumRx from June 2021 through the end of the audit scope. As a result, the information submitted for the 44 encounters was inaccurate or incomplete. When pharmacies submit claims with an incorrect number of authorized refills, it affects Medicaid members' ability to get refills. As a result, a member may receive more or less medication than the prescriber intended. When pharmacies report inaccurate or incomplete pharmacy claim data, it may limit HHSC's ability to provide oversight through claims review or data analysis.

#### **Recommendation 2**

TCH–SP should verify that the authorized refills it submits for each pharmacy claim are complete and accurate.

#### **Management Response**

#### **Action Plan**

Texas Children's Hospital agrees with the OIG findings. Upon the review of encounters in the scope of this audit, Texas Children's Hospital identified that a data submission error occurred due to an electronic system glitch. This electronic glitch caused the number of authorized refills to not be submitted at adjudication. The error was only at data submission and the correct refill number was printed on the patient label. To correct this error, the payor sheet field 415-DF was rectified on May 23, 2023. Additionally, effective July 14, 2023, the Pharmacy technology team began performing internal audits for quality control and will continue ongoing monitoring every week. Reviews will be conducted to ensure that no unauthorized changes are made to the system.

#### Responsible Manager

Director of Specialty Pharmacy

#### **Target Implementation Date**

Implemented May 23, 2023

#### Appendix A: Objective, Scope, and Criteria

#### **Objective and Scope**

The audit objective was to determine whether TCH–SP (a) properly billed for selected paid encounters associated with Texas Medicaid members enrolled with UnitedHealthcare and (b) complied with applicable contractual, state, and federal requirements.

The audit scope covered the period from September 1, 2017, through August 31, 2022.

#### Criteria

OIG Audit used the following criteria to evaluate the information provided:

- 42 U.S.C. § 1320a–7 (2016 through 2022)
- 22 Tex. Admin. Code §§ 291.32 (2015 through 2020), 291.33 (2016 through 2022), and 291.34 (2016 through 2022)
- OptumRx Pharmacy Provider Manual (2017 through 2022)

#### **Appendix B: Detailed Methodology**

OIG Audit issued an engagement letter to TCH–SP on March 10, 2023, providing information about the upcoming audit, and conducted fieldwork from April 6, 2023, through June 8, 2023.

OIG Audit also reviewed TCH–SP's system of internal controls, including components of internal control, <sup>14</sup> within the context of the audit objectives by:

- Interviewing TCH–SP management and staff with oversight responsibilities for the Medicaid paid claims for UnitedHealthcare members.
- Reviewing relevant documentation, such as policies and procedures.
- Performing selected tests of the relevant documentation, including original prescriptions and dispensing labels.
- Performing a walk-through of the pharmacy dispensing system, including edit checks of the various data entry fields for prescriptions and automated refill calculations.

#### **Data Reliability**

OIG Audit assessed the reliability of data TCH–SP provided by tracing pharmacy encounter data to the pharmacy source documents and interviewing relevant TCH–SP personnel knowledgeable about the systems and data. OIG Audit determined that the data was sufficiently reliable for the purpose of this audit.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> For more information on the components of internal control, see the United States Government Accountability Office's *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government*, (Sept. 2014), <a href="https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-14-704g.pdf">https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-14-704g.pdf</a> (accessed Apr. 16, 2021).

#### **Testing Methodology**

OIG Audit collected information for this audit through interviews and electronic communications with TCH–SP management and staff. OIG Audit reviewed:

- Supporting claims documentation for the sample of pharmacy encounters, which included refill claims, billed to UnitedHealthcare during the audit scope.
- Relevant TCH–SP policies and procedures.
- Relevant application processes and controls associated with the systems
   TCH–SP used to process and support pharmacy claims.

For this audit, OIG Audit used a population of MCO pharmacy encounters with service dates ranging from September 1, 2017, through August 31, 2022. The population and the sample of 120 MCO pharmacy encounters selected for testing both contained only refills. OIG Audit obtained claim information from the pharmacy to support the encounters reported by the MCO.

#### Sampling Methodology

Auditors selected a nonstatistical random sample related to UnitedHealthcare paid pharmacy encounters through random and risk-based selection. The test results as reported do not identify which items were randomly selected or selected based on risk; therefore, it would not be appropriate to project the test results to the population.

This sample design was chosen to include items with specific characteristics—such as a 30-day supply and dispensed refills greater than 11—as identified in encounter data analysis performed during the audit.

#### Sample Testing

OIG Audit tested a total of 120 nonstatistical sample pharmacy encounters selected from UnitedHealthcare's paid pharmacy encounters to determine whether the encounters were supported and complied with applicable contractual, state, and federal requirements. OIG Audit verified supporting claim documentation provided by TCH–SP and compared it with paid pharmacy encounter data. Data testing included verification of:

Existence of the prescription.

- Required information included on the prescription. Specifically, patient name; medication name, strength, quantity, and dosage directions; issuance date; and prescriber name.
- Medication dispensed as prescribed.
- Prescription number, filled date, and expiration date.
- Recipient signature confirming delivery.
- Authorization of refills.
- Accuracy of paid pharmacy encounters.
- Prescribers not excluded from Texas Medicaid.
- Pharmacist and pharmacy technician employment with the pharmacy as reported to the Texas State Board of Pharmacy.

#### Appendix C: Related Reports

- Managed Care Pharmacy Claims Paid to ReCept Pharmacy #1, <u>AUD-22-023</u>, August 22, 2022
- Managed Care Pharmacy Claims Paid to Rx Plus Pharmacy of Live Oak, <u>AUD-21-021</u>, August 13, 2021

#### Appendix D: Resources for Additional Information

The following resources provide additional information about the topics covered in this report.

#### For more information on the Texas HHS Vendor Drug Program:

"Vendor Drug Program," Texas HHS, <a href="https://www.txvendordrug.com/">https://www.txvendordrug.com/</a> (accessed June 12, 2023)

#### For more information on Texas Children's Hospital-Specialty Pharmacy:

"Specialty Pharmacy," Texas Children's Hospital, https://www.texaschildrens.org/departments/specialty-pharmacy (accessed June 12, 2023)

#### For more information on UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of Texas, L.L.C.:

"Texas health plans," UnitedHealthcare Community Plan, <a href="https://www.uhccommunityplan.com/tx">https://www.uhccommunityplan.com/tx</a> (accessed June 12, 2023)

#### For more information on UnitedHealthcare Insurance Company, Inc.:

Homepage, UnitedHealthcare, <a href="https://www.uhc.com/about-us">https://www.uhc.com/about-us</a> (accessed June 12, 2023)

#### For more information on UnitedHealth Group, Inc.:

Homepage, UnitedHealth Group, <a href="https://www.unitedhealthgroup.com/">https://www.unitedhealthgroup.com/</a> (accessed June 12, 2023)

#### For more information on AlignRx:

Homepage, AlignRx, <a href="https://alignrx.org/">https://alignrx.org/</a> (accessed June 12, 2023)

#### **Appendix E: Report Team and Distribution**

#### **Report Team**

OIG staff members who contributed to this audit report include:

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# Appendix F: OIG Mission, Leadership, and Contact Information

The mission of OIG is to prevent, detect, and deter fraud, waste, and abuse through the audit, investigation, and inspection of federal and state taxpayer dollars used in the provision and delivery of health and human services in Texas. The senior leadership guiding the fulfillment of OIG's mission and statutory responsibility includes:

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- Kacy J. VerColen, Chief of Audit and Inspections
- Diane Salisbury, Chief of Data Reviews
- Susan Biles, Chief of Staff, Chief of Policy and Performance
- Erik Cary, Chief Counsel
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