

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 295
By: Schwertner
Higher Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Interested parties report that Texas does not have a system in place to track the supply of, demand for, need for, and distribution of medical students in the state and they emphasize that, despite spending billions of dollars in appropriations for the education and training of physicians, the state does not measure whether that investment produces physicians with the essential medical specialties necessary to meet the needs of Texas' growing population. The parties conclude that the state loses its investment in these medical school graduates when they leave Texas to pursue graduate education elsewhere. The parties cite a Texas Medical Association report in support of their assertion that physicians who complete medical school and graduate medical education training in Texas are more likely to practice in Texas.

In addition, graduate medical education programs in Texas have not expanded even though medical student enrollment has increased, according to the concerned parties, and they highlight the specific need to entice more primary care physicians to practice in the state, particularly in underserved areas. The state needs more information in order to enact effective policies and incentives to address these issues. S.B. 295 seeks to gather that information by creating a tracking system for the initial residency program choices made by medical school graduates in Texas and for the initial practice choices of Texas medical residents.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in SECTION 1 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

S.B. 295 amends the Education Code to require the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, by rule and not later than January 1, 2016, to establish a tracking system under which the coordinating board acquires and maintains data regarding the initial residency program choices made by graduates of medical schools in Texas and the initial practice choices made by persons completing medical residency programs in Texas. The bill requires the tracking system to use any data reasonably available to the coordinating board, including data maintained by or accessible to medical schools or residency programs in Texas and, with respect to a person who completes a medical residency program in Texas, to collect relevant information for the two-year period following completion of that program, including whether and for how long physicians who complete such programs work in primary care in Texas and which medical specialties they report as their primary medical practice and the locations of the practices established by those persons.

S.B. 295 requires the coordinating board to adopt rules for the implementation and administration of the tracking system as soon as practicable after the bill's effective date and authorizes the coordinating board to adopt the initial rules in the manner provided by law for emergency rules.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2015.