

**SUBJECT:** Health-maintenance organization coverage of well-child care benefits

**COMMITTEE:** Insurance — favorable, without amendment

**VOTE:** 7 ayes — Smithee, Eiland, Burnam, G. Lewis, J. Moreno, Olivo, Wise

0 nays

2 absent — Seaman, Thompson

**WITNESSES:** For — Joseph Martinec; Debra Feedenberg, Texas Medical Association, Texgene, Texas Pediatric Society

Against — None

**BACKGROUND:** Health-maintenance organizations (HMOs) are regulated under the federal Public Health Service Act, 42 U.S.C. sec. 300e et seq., and the Texas Insurance Code, chapter 20A.

Under state law and Texas Department of Health (TDH) rules, physicians are responsible for ensuring that newborn children are screened twice for specified genetic and metabolic abnormalities within 14 days after birth. Physicians and hospitals perform this screening by buying from TDH screening kits that cost \$13.75 apiece, placing blood specimens in the kits, and sending them to the TDH laboratory for analysis.

**DIGEST:** HB 2748 would require HMOs to provide well-child care from birth that complies with federal and TDH requirements.

This bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house.

**SUPPORTERS SAY:** HB 2748 would ensure that physicians receive their due reimbursement from HMOs for well-child care. Some HMOs still are not reimbursing doctors for these screening services, even though federal and state regulations require HMOs to provide benefits for well-child care from birth, and even though the Texas Department of Insurance always has interpreted these benefits to include genetic and metabolic screenings.

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OPPONENTS      No apparent opposition.  
SAY: