

SUBJECT: Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center Diabetes Research Center

COMMITTEE: Higher Education — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 7 ayes — Rangel, F. Brown, Farabee, Goolsby, J. Jones, Uher, West

0 nays

2 absent — Morrison, E. Reyna

WITNESSES: For — None

Against — None

On — Mike Sanders, Texas Tech University System

DIGEST: CSHB 2510 would require the Texas Tech University System board of regents to establish the Texas Tech Diabetes Research Center to research issues related to diabetes and associated conditions.

The board would have to organize, control, and manage the center; approve the employment of personnel, who would be considered employees of the Texas Tech system; approve the operating budget of the center; and select the site for the center at the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center in El Paso. The center could cooperate with a public or private entity to perform its research functions. The board could solicit, accept, and administer gifts and grants from public and private sources for the center's use and benefit.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2001.

SUPPORTERS SAY: CSHB 2510 would provide an underserved population with needed access to services and education about diabetes. In 1997, 95,000 Hispanic people in Texas were diagnosed with diabetes, twice the number of non-Hispanics. At 8.7 percent, Hispanics have the highest death rate from Type II diabetes.

Many people are not aware that they have diabetes until some of its effects develop, such as blindness, kidney disease, and heart disease. Education, income, and access to health care all affect morbidity and mortality rates among Hispanics. The risk of complications arising from diabetes can be reduced if people become educated about the disease, learn and practice skills to control their blood glucose levels, and receive regular checkups.

CSHB 2510 would place the Diabetes Research Center in an optimal location. The concentration of diabetes in the Hispanic community is heaviest along the Texas-Mexico border. In El Paso, an estimated 40,000 people have been diagnosed with diabetes, and another 40,000 have diabetes but are unaware of it. The death rate from diabetes in El Paso is nearly 10 percent higher than the statewide average, with diabetes as the fifth leading cause of death. No large research institution exists along the border. A center at El Paso could help people along the border and in Alpine, Midland, Odessa, Lubbock, and Amarillo. El Paso also would provide the resources of the Texas Tech medical school, other medical resources, and existing infrastructure that would complement the diabetes center. Because of its location, El Paso also could collaborate with Mexico and New Mexico in efforts to eradicate diabetes.

CSHB 2510 would help provide research in treating a major cause of death. Diabetes is considered an epidemic by service providers who treat the complications caused by uncontrolled disease, such as arteriosclerosis and cerebrovascular disease. The center would offer continuing research in disease prevention and management.

OPPONENTS
SAY:

No apparent opposition.

NOTES:

The committee substitute named the center the Texas Tech Diabetes Research Center, rather than the Texas Diabetes Research Center. It would specify that an employee of the center would be an employee of the Texas Tech system, rather than of Texas Tech University, and that the center would be located at the regional academic health center of the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center in El Paso. It also removed the provision that the center would be subject to the rules and supervision of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

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According to the fiscal note, the bill would cost \$1,090,00 in fiscal 2002-03 and \$1.2 million each year thereafter.

The House-passed version of SB 1 by Ellis, the fiscal 2002-03 general appropriations bill, includes in the Article 11 “wish list” an appropriation, contingent on enactment of HB 2510, of \$272,500 in fiscal 2002 and \$817,500 in fiscal 2003 for a Diabetes Research Center at the Texas Tech Health Sciences Center.

The companion bill, SB 1546 by Duncan, has been referred to the Senate Education Committee.