

SUBJECT: Allowing health care providers to choose vaccines under a federal program

COMMITTEE: Public Health — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 8 ayes — Gray, Coleman, Capelo, Delisi, Glaze, Maxey, Uresti, Wohlgemuth

0 nays

1 absent — Longoria

SENATE VOTE: On final passage, April 20 — 30-0, on Local and Uncontested Calendar

WITNESSES: (*On House companion bill, HB 2670:*)

For — None

Against — None

On — *Registered, but did not testify:* Linda Linville and Sharilyn Stanley, Texas Department of Health

BACKGROUND: Congress created the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program in 1993 to help increase childhood immunizations by providing vaccines to eligible children under age 18. The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention buys vaccines at a discount and distributes them to states, which in turn distribute them at no charge to private physicians and public health clinics. The Texas Department of Health (TDH) is responsible for buying vaccines for the state and for distributing them to health-care providers. TDH selects which brands to buy from a federal list.

DIGEST: CSSB 281 would require TDH to develop a plan to allow health care providers in the VFC program to choose which brands of vaccines to use from the federal list, as well as choose combination vaccines. TDH would be directed to schedule the implementation of the plan by departmental region and based on the availability of funds.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2001.

NOTES: The substitute added a provision directing TDH to schedule the implementation of the plan by departmental region and based on the availability of funds.