

- SUBJECT:** Study to increase the number of physicians practicing in Texas
- COMMITTEE:** Public Health — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 9 ayes — Delisi, Laubenberg, Jackson, Cohen, Coleman, Gonzales, S. King, Olivo, Truitt
0 nays
- SENATE VOTE:** On final passage, May 8 — 31-0
- WITNESSES:** For — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Ed Berger, SETON Family of Hospitals; Jaime Capelo, Patients FIRST, Texas Chapter of the American College of Cardiology, Texas Society of Anesthesiologists, Pediatric Medical Group; Dan Finch, Texas Medical Association; Chuck Girard, Texas Orthopaedic Association; Mazie M. Jamison, Children’s Medical Center Dallas; Marshall Kenderdine, Texas Academy of Family Physicians; Carrie Kroll, Texas Pediatric Society; Marisa Martin, Scott & White Center for Healthcare Policy; Michele O’Brien, CHRISTUS Santa Rosa Healthcare; Vicki Perkins, CHRISTUS Santa Rosa Children’s Hospital; Rachael Reed, Texas Dermatological Society, Texas Neurological Society; Joel Romo, American Heart Association; Denise Rose, Texas Children’s Hospital; Matthew T. Wall, Texas Hospital Association; Melissa Wilson, Texas Society of Plastic Surgeons; Chris Yanas, University Health System)

Against — None

On — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Jaime Garanflo, Texas Medical Board; Jane McFarland, Texas Medical Board; Steve Murdock)
- BACKGROUND:** Currently, it can take from six months to one year for the Texas Medical Board (TMB) to process a new medical license, and there is a backlog of nearly 3,000 pending applications from physicians. Additionally, some parts of Texas, including rural and urban areas, suffer from a shortage of physicians in general or physicians who practice certain specialties.
- DIGEST:** SB 1095 would create a study to examine methods to increase the number of medical residency programs, medical residents, and physicians

practicing medical specialties in the state. The Texas Health Care Policy Council would conduct the study in conjunction with the Institute for Demographic and Socioeconomic Research at The University of Texas at San Antonio, the Regional Center for Health Workforce Studies at the Center for Health Economics and Policy of The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, and the TMB.

The study would:

- examine the feasibility of using a percentage of physician licensing fees to increase the number of medical residency programs and medical residents;
- emphasize and recommend an action plan for increasing the number of medical residency programs and medical residents in medically underserved areas of Texas;
- emphasize and recommend an action plan for increasing the number of physicians in the state practicing underrepresented medical specialties; and
- determine the number of medical residents that obtain licenses to practice medicine in this state upon completion of a medical residency program.

By December 1, 2008, the Texas Health Care Policy Council would report the study results and make available the raw data to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the House, the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services, and the House Committee on Public Health.

The council could accept gifts, grants, and donations of any kind from any source to fund the study, which would expire January 1, 2009.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2007.

NOTES:

HB 1973 by Delisi, as passed by the House, would require TMB to evaluate its process for licensing physicians and reduce unnecessary delays. The Senate passed its version of HB 1973 on the Local and Uncontested Calendar, and the House and the Senate appointed conferees on May 21.