

- SUBJECT:** Expansion of the HHSC electronic eligibility information pilot project
- COMMITTEE:** Human Services — committee substitute recommended
- VOTE:** 9 ayes — Rose, Herrero, Darby, Elkins, Hernandez, Hughes, Legler, Naishtat, Walle
0 nays
- WITNESSES:** For — Robin Herskowitz, RH2 Consulting, Inc., Network Sciences; Ann Kitchen, Integrated Care Collaboration, Harris County Healthcare Alliance; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Kit Abney Spelce, insure-a-kid; Celia Hagert, Center for Public Policy Priorities; Michelle Romero, Texas Medical Association)
Against — None
- BACKGROUND:** In 2007, the 80th Legislature enacted HB 321 by Dukes, which required the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to establish a pilot program to import electronic eligibility information from a regional indigent care collaborative system. The entity selected for the pilot, the Indigent Care Collaboration of Central Texas, uses a network of providers that employ electronic systems to assess a person's potential eligibility for health and human services programs. HHSC's December 2008 report on this pilot program indicated that the basic technology and systems are in place to process imported electronic information from regional indigent care providers, but the report recommended continuation of the pilot so that further enhancements to the technology could be made.

The Texas Integrated Eligibility Redesign System (TIERS) is a web-based application that is being implemented on a regional basis to replace Texas' existing system used to determine eligibility for benefits provided by HHSC, such as Medicaid.
- DIGEST:** By September 1, 2010, CSHB 583 would require HHSC to expand the pilot project to assess the feasibility, costs, and benefits of directly importing electronic eligibility information from a regional safety net provider collaborative organization. The expansion would include at least one additional urban area that has implemented TIERS.

The bill would add to the requirements of the pilot that HHSC would create a project in which the collaborative organization would interface with HHSC through TIERS or another eligibility system to import automatically electronic applications created by the organization, with minimal human intervention. HHSC would process applications in a timely manner and work directly with each organization to obtain missing documents and resolve enrollment issues. Applicants would have to authorize the organization to receive information concerning their applications directly from HHSC.

HHSC would report to each safety net provider collaborative organization and the Legislative Budget Board the number of applications processed, the timeliness of application processing, and the reasons for delays. HHSC would work with the organizations to decrease delays in application processing.

Not later than December 15, 2011, HHSC would assess the cost-effectiveness, efficacy, efficiency, and benefits of using electronic eligibility information imported from electronic systems operated by regional safety net provider collaborative organizations. HHSC would report the findings of the pilot to the appropriate House and Senate standing committees.

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, 2009.