

SUBJECT: Transferring the emergency medical dispatch resource centers program

COMMITTEE: Homeland Security and Public Safety — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 9 ayes — Phillips, Nevárez, Burns, Dale, Johnson, Metcalf, Moody,
M. White, Wray

0 nays

WITNESSES: For — None

Against — None

On — Steve Shelton, Texas AHEC East, the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Kelli Merriweather, Commission on State Emergency Communications)

BACKGROUND: The regional emergency medical dispatch resource centers program was established as a pilot program in SB 523 by Deuell, enacted in 2005 by the 79th Legislature. Health and Safety Code, sec. 771.102 stipulates that the program use emergency medical dispatchers located in regional emergency medical dispatch resource centers to provide life-saving and other emergency medical instructions to people who need guidance while awaiting arrival of emergency medical personnel. The program was established and is overseen by the area health education center at the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston (UTMB).

Sec. 771.106 allows money in the 9-1-1 services fee fund, as well as other state funds, to be appropriated to UTMB Galveston on behalf of the center to fund the program. The health center also may seek grant funding for the program, and a political subdivision participating in the program may pay an appropriate share of the program's cost.

DIGEST: HB 479 would transfer the administration of the regional emergency medical dispatch resource centers program from the area health education center at the University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) at Galveston to

the Commission on State Emergency Communications.

The bill would repeal a section of code that defines "center" in the affected subchapter as the area health education center at UTMB and a section that requires the Commission on State Emergency Communications to provide technical assistance to the center.

The bill would remove the specification in current law allowing money in the 9-1-1 services fee fund to be appropriated to UTMB Galveston on behalf of the health center and instead would allow the appropriation of unspecified state funds to the commission for the program. Administration of the program would be transferred to the commission on the bill's effective date, as would all unspent and unobligated funds appropriated by the Legislature to UTMB Galveston on behalf of the center to fund the program. The commission, with the agreement of the center, could accept the transfer of any records, employees, or property related to the program's operation.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2015.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

HB 479 would transfer the administration of the regional emergency medical dispatch resource centers program to a more appropriate state entity. The area health education center at the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston acts only as a conduit for the funding to the program and has no other role in operating the center. Transferring the program from the area health education center to the Commission on State Emergency Communications would allow funding to go directly to the program instead of having another state agency channel the appropriated funds.

This bill would allow all current users of the program to continue receiving the same service. Housing the program under the commission simply would enhance the visibility and transparency of the program.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

No apparent opposition.