

- SUBJECT:** Allowing certain health providers to enroll in Medicaid MCO networks
- COMMITTEE:** Human Services — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 9 ayes — Raymond, Frank, Keough, Klick, Miller, Minjarez, Rose, Swanson, Wu
- 0 nays
- WITNESSES:** For — Steve Nguyen, Texas Optometric Association; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Jay Propes, Texas Ophthalmological Association.; Bj Avery, Texas Optometric Association)
- Against — None
- On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Jami Snyder, Health and Human Services Commission)
- BACKGROUND:** Human Resources Code, sec. 32.072(a) entitles Medicaid recipients to select and have direct access to a participating ophthalmologist or therapeutic optometrist for nonsurgical eye health care services. To use these services, patients do not need a referral from a health care professional or a prior authorization.
- Observers have noted that in some circumstances, Medicaid managed care organization providers require patients or eye doctors to obtain prior authorization before accessing or providing nonsurgical eye health care services.
- DIGEST:** HB 3675 would require the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to order each Medicaid managed care organization (MCO) provider to include certain optometrists, ophthalmologists, and accredited optometry or ophthalmology training programs as in-network providers if they agreed to the terms, conditions, Medicaid reimbursement rate, and standards of care required by the MCO.

HHSC could not prevent certain eye health care service providers who joined an established practice that contracted with a Medicaid MCO or who were employed to provide optometry or ophthalmology training at a higher education institution from enrolling as Medicaid providers if they met certain terms and conditions. The commission also could not prevent an institution of higher education from enrolling as a Medicaid provider if it met the applicable criteria.

The bill would provide that a Medicaid recipient, ophthalmologist, or a therapeutic optometrist would not need to obtain prior authorization or a referral from a health care professional on the patient's behalf for nonsurgical eye care services.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2017.

NOTES:

A companion bill, SB 2228 by Hinojosa, was referred to the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services on March 29.