

SUBJECT: Creating a plan to increase the use of telemedicine and telehealth services

COMMITTEE: Public Health — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 10 ayes — S. Thompson, Wray, Allison, Frank, Guerra, Lucio, Ortega, Price, Sheffield, Zedler

0 nays

1 absent — Coleman

WITNESSES: For — Nora Belcher, Texas e-Health Alliance; Mary Pat Smith and Ahia Shabaaz, Texas Silver-Haired Legislature; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Christina Hoppe, Children's Hospital Association of Texas (CHAT); Dennis Borel, Coalition of Texans With Disabilities; Priscilla Camacho, Dallas Regional Chamber; Luis A. Cortes, Disabled American Veterans-KEL-LAC Chapter 114; Jesse Ozuna, Doctor's Hospital at Renaissance; Brenda Koegler, League of Women Voters of Texas; Christine Yanas, Methodist Healthcare Ministries of South Texas; Blake Rocap, NARAL Pro-Choice Texas; Greg Hansch and Alissa Sughrue, National Alliance on Mental Illness-Texas; Will Francis, National Association of Social Workers-Texas Chapter; Elizabeth Lippincott, Texas Border Coalition; Deanna L. Kuykendall, Texas Brain Injury Providers Alliance; Lee Johnson, Texas Council of Community Centers; Sara Gonzalez, Texas Hospital Association; Dan Finch, Texas Medical Association; Erin Cusack, Texas Nurse Practitioners; Don McBeath, Texas Organization of Rural and Community Hospitals; Nataly Saucedo, United Ways of Texas; and six individuals)

Against — None

On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Cliff Luckey, Health and Human Services Commission)

BACKGROUND: Government Code sec. 531.02161 requires the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission by rule to establish and

adopt minimum standards of an operating system used in the provision of telemedicine medical services, telehealth services, or home telemonitoring service by a health care facility participating in Medicaid.

Interested parties suggest that telemedicine and telehealth services could serve an important role in addressing the lack of access to medical care in certain areas, the decreased mobility of the senior population, and the need for affordable health care.

DIGEST: HB 1782 would require the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to develop and implement a plan to:

- expand the use of and increase access to telemedicine and telehealth services and related mobile applications for those services by health care providers for Texans; and
- increase the availability of critical medical and health care services to Texans in areas determined by the HHSC to be medically underserved, including the border region and rural areas.

The action plan would include short- and long-term recommendations, statutory and administrative reforms, and options for funding.

In developing and implementing the plan, HHSC would be required to seek the assistance of the Texas Hospital Association, the Texas Medical Association, teaching hospitals, and the statewide health coordinating council and to consult with health care providers, advocacy groups, relevant federal agencies, and any other interested persons HHSC considered necessary.

By September 1, 2021, HHSC would submit recommendations and a short- and long-term plan to implement those recommendations to the governor and Legislature and to begin implementing the short-term plan. By September 1, 2023, HHSC would be required to have fully implemented the short-term plan, and by September 1, 2029, HHSC would be required to have fully implemented the long-term plan.

HHSC would be required to include the short-term and long-term plans in the update of the strategic plan for HHSC. The bill's provisions would expire September 1, 2030.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2019.

NOTES:

According to the Legislative Budget Board, the fiscal implications of the bill cannot be determined at this time. As the action plan required by the bill has not yet been developed, HHSC is unable to determine what funding options may be available to implement the action plan, or determine the costs that could be associated with implementation of the short- and long-term plans.