

- SUBJECT:** Expanding the Deaf Blind with Multiple Disabilities waiver program
- COMMITTEE:** Human Services — committee substitute recommended
- VOTE:** 9 ayes — Frank, Hinojosa, Clardy, Deshotel, Klick, Meza, Miller, Noble, Rose
- 0 nays
- WITNESSES:** For — Richard Atkinson, Family To Family Network; Jill Bradshaw, Texas Chargers; Robbie Caldwell, Paul Welch, and Vivecca Hartman, The DeafBlind Multihandicapped Association of Texas; Beanca Williams, Volunteers of America Texas; Steve Ferry; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Bob Kafka, ADAPT; John Woodley, Advocates for Disability Access; Cyral Miller, Alliance of and for Visually Impaired Texans; Jennifer Bailey, DeafBlind Multihandicapped Association of Texas; Jeff Miller, Disability Rights Texas; Lauren Rangel, Easterseals Central Texas; Aaron Gregg, Texas Association of the Deaf; Joey Gidseg, Texas Democrats with Disabilities; Linda Litzinger, Texas Parent to Parent; Kim Powers and Laurel Miller, Texas SSP Coalition; Ginger Mayeaux, The Arc of Texas; and nine individuals)
- Against — None
- On — Randi Turner, Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Ron Lucey, Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities; Lori Breslow and Molly Lester, Health and Human Services Commission)
- BACKGROUND:** The Deaf-Blind with Multiple Disabilities program is a Medicaid waiver program that provides community-based services and supports to an eligible individual.
- The Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities has recommended increasing the number of slots available in the program as a cost-effective way of serving individuals in home-based and community-based settings.

DIGEST: CSHB 3991 would increase the number of persons served under the Deaf-Blind with Multiple Disabilities (DBMD) waiver program and establish minimum reimbursement rates for certain providers.

The executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) would be required to increase the number of persons receiving home-based and community-based services under the DBMD program by 100 for each of the state fiscal years in 2020 and 2021. For fiscal 2022 and each subsequent fiscal year, the commissioner would have to increase the number of persons receiving services by 10 percent of the number of recipients on the DBMD interest list as determined on the first day of the applicable fiscal year and rounded to the nearest whole number.

The bill would require the commissioner by rule to establish minimum reimbursement rates for interveners and orientation and mobility specialists providing services under the DBMD program. The rates would have to take into account the provider's level of training, education, and experience, and be adjusted annually for inflation.

As soon as practicable after the effective date of the bill, the commissioner would have to adopt the required rules and ensure that the minimum reimbursement rates were based on the most recent full rate analysis conducted by HHSC. If before implementing any provision of the bill a state agency determined that a waiver or authorization from a federal agency was necessary, the agency affected by the provision would have to request the waiver or authorization and could delay implementing that provision until the waiver or authorization was granted.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2019.

NOTES: According to the Legislative Budget Board, the bill would have a negative impact of about \$6 million to general revenue related funds through fiscal 2020-21.