

SUBJECT: Providing educational assistance on communicable diseases near border

COMMITTEE: Public Health — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 11 ayes — S. Thompson, Wray, Allison, Coleman, Frank, Guerra, Lucio, Ortega, Price, Sheffield, Zedler

0 nays

SENATE VOTE: On final passage, April 29 — 26-5 (Birdwell, Hall, Hancock, Nelson, Schwertner)

WITNESSES: No public hearing

BACKGROUND: Some have suggested the need to provide additional assistance and training to local public health departments near the Texas-Mexico border because the incidence of tuberculosis in border areas is significantly higher than the statewide average.

DIGEST: SB 1120 would require the Department of State Health Services (DSHS), in collaboration with health authorities, local health departments, and public health districts, to provide to certain health professionals continuing education designed to reduce the incidence of communicable and other diseases in counties adjacent to the international border with Mexico.

The continuing education could address:

- the diagnosis and treatment of communicable and other diseases, including certain types of tuberculosis, tuberculosis and HIV coinfections, sexually transmitted diseases and HIV, and liver diseases;
- methods for increasing pediatric and adult immunization rates;
- strategies for improving health care system operations related to public health;

- identifying, monitoring, tracking, and responding to communicable and other diseases; and
- any other matter that DSHS determined would assist health professionals, local health departments, and public health districts with addressing respective public health challenges that existed in those applicable counties.

DSHS would have to identify and assess the accessibility of continuing education resources and programs for local health departments that could provide the continuing education.

The department could solicit or accept gifts, grants, or donations to fund health professional continuing education. DSHS also would have to collaborate with state and federal agencies, nonprofit organizations, public and private hospitals, institutions of higher education, and the private sector to identify, apply for, and solicit sources of funding for health professional continuing education.

DSHS would have to implement provisions of this bill only if the Legislature appropriated money specifically for that purpose. Otherwise, the department could implement provisions of the bill using other appropriations available for that purpose.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2019.

NOTES:

According to the Legislative Budget Board, the bill would have an estimated negative impact of about \$453,000 through fiscal 2020-21.