

SUBJECT: Requiring health plans to cover the cost of newborn screening tests

COMMITTEE: Insurance — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 8 ayes — Lucio, Oliverson, G. Bonnen, S. Davis, Julie Johnson, Lambert,  
Paul, C. Turner

0 nays

1 absent — Vo

SENATE VOTE: On final passage, April 11 — 31-0, on Local and Uncontested Calendar

WITNESSES: *On House companion bill, HB 2582:*

For — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Eric Kunish, National Alliance on Mental Illness-Austin; Greg Hansch, National Alliance on Mental Illness-Texas; Will Francis, National Association of Social Workers-Texas Chapter; Marshall Kenderdine, Texas Academy of Family Physicians; Jamie Dudensing, Texas Association of Health Plans; Mike Meroney, Texas Association of Health Underwriters; Cameron Duncan, Texas Hospital Association; Troy Alexander, Texas Medical Association; John Carlo, Texas Medical Association, Texas Pediatrics Association, Texas Association of Family Medicine; Clayton Travis, Texas Pediatrics Society)

Against — None

On — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Doug Danzeiser, Texas Department of Insurance; Grace Kubin, Texas Department of State Health Services)

BACKGROUND: 42 U.S.C. sec. 300e-1 requires health plans to cover well-child care from birth.

Health and Safety Code sec. 33.011 requires that newborns be tested for certain diseases and disorders.

**DIGEST:** CSSB 747 would prohibit health benefit plans that provided maternity benefits or accident and health coverage for additional newborn children from excluding coverage for newborn screenings and the cost of test kits.

The Department of State Health Services (DSHS) would be required to publish the cost of newborn screening test kits on its website along with instructions for the full claim and reimbursement process for the kits. The bill would authorize DSHS to change the cost published no later than 90 days before the date DSHS published notice of a change on its website, and DSHS would have to keep a record of the previous cost for one year.

The executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission would have to adopt any rules necessary to implement the bill.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2019, and would apply only to health benefit plans delivered, issued for delivery, or renewed on or after January 1, 2020.

**SUPPORTERS SAY:** CSSB 747 would ensure that health benefit plans covered the cost of newborn screening test kits that were purchased from the state by pediatricians. By requiring that the Department of State Health Services post a notice of test kit price changes on its website 90 days in advance, physicians, health benefit plans, and other stakeholders would be able to prepare for price fluctuations.

**OPPONENTS SAY:** No concerns identified.