

**SUBJECT:** Requiring an evaluation of 2-1-1 services provided in Texas

**COMMITTEE:** Human Services — committee substitute recommended

**VOTE:** 6 ayes — Frank, Hinojosa, Hull, Klick, Meza, Neave  
1 nay — Noble  
2 absent — Rose, Shaheen

**WITNESSES:** For — Ashley Harris, United Ways of Texas; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Marisa Finley, Baylor Scott & White Health; Joshua Houston, Texas Impact)  
Against — None  
On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Gerald Welty Jr., Convention of States)

**BACKGROUND:** Government Code sec. 2306.1096 establishes the duties of the Housing and Health Services Coordination Council, which are related to the provision of service-enriched housing in Texas. The council must develop a biennial plan for implementing its goals, including the development and implementation of policies to increase efforts to offer service-enriched housing and the identification of barriers affecting such efforts, and must deliver a biennial report of the council's findings and recommendations to the governor and the Legislative Budget Board.

2-1-1 Texas is a program of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission that connects Texans to the Texas Information and Referral Network for help with basic needs and connection to community-based services.

Many other states have used their 2-1-1 technology and collaboration infrastructure to support specialized populations, including to enable closed-loop referrals for young families, provide care coordination and

navigation services for children and families on Medicaid, and implement a coordinated entry process for certain services. Interested parties in Texas have suggested the state identify strategies on how to best leverage Texas' 2-1-1 system capabilities for these purposes and to provide for better use of the system in disaster response and recovery, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**DIGEST:** CSHB 1225 would require the Health and Services Coordination Council by August 1 of each year to complete and submit to the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) an evaluation of the 2-1-1 services provided by the Texas Information and Referral Network (TIRN) to help inform an expansion of service-enriched housing throughout Texas.

Among other considerations listed in the bill, the evaluation of the 2-1-1 services would have to consider:

- data collection from user calls and website visits to determine the extent of 2-1-1 use and the demographic characteristics and existing needs of 2-1-1 users;
- the database of TIRN with respect to current integration status of area-specific information and resources, the process of identifying new service providers and including them in the database, the monitoring of local and state organizations and entities to ensure the provision of updated lists of resources, and the ability to timely update emergency-related information;
- 2-1-1 Texas user interviews and recommendations;
- referral outcome statistics for 2-1-1 Texas users; and
- 2-1-1 Texas leadership interviews and recommendations, including recommendations related to technology and communication enhancements, measures designed to connect specialized populations with available services, and supportive practices for engagement in special projects that leverage the 2-1-1 platform.

TIRN would be required to work with the council to determine what de-identified information could be included in the required annual evaluation.

As part of the council's biennial plan, the council would have to plan to improve the delivery of community resource information and referrals by considering the results of the 2-1-1 services evaluation.

TDHCA could use funds from general revenue to contract for services on behalf of the council in relation to the 2-1-1 services evaluation.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2021.

NOTES:

According to the Legislative Budget Board, the bill would have a negative impact of about \$700,000 to general revenue through fiscal 2023.