

**SUBJECT:** Authorizing certain premium assistance programs for small employers

**COMMITTEE:** County Affairs — committee substitute recommended

**VOTE:** 7 ayes — Neave Criado, Stucky, Gerdes, J. Jones, Orr, Rosenthal, Schatzline  
2 nays — Slaton, Tinderholt

**WITNESSES:** For — James Rodriguez, TexHealth Central Texas; Ron Buffum, TexHealth CT (*Registered, but did not testify*: Shannon Meroney, National Association of Benefit & Insurance Professionals - Texas)  
Against — None  
On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Shawn Hall Lecuona, Kri’ah b’shalom)

**BACKGROUND:** Some have suggested that revising provisions that restrict the ability of premium assistance programs to operate in a county without commissioners court approval could help improve the affordability of health care coverage for more small businesses throughout the state.

**DIGEST:** CSHB 5280 would allow a community-based nonprofit organization to establish or participate in a regional health care program for employees of small employers without the participation of the county commissioners court if the program was a premium assistance program that was not offering health care services or health care benefits. The bill would make conforming changes in statute to reflect the revision.  
  
The bill would take effect September 1, 2023.