

SUBJECT: Requiring an evaluation of 2-1-1 Texas services

COMMITTEE: Human Services — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 9 ayes — Frank, Rose, Campos, Hull, Klick, Manuel, Noble, Ramos, Shaheen
0 nays

WITNESSES: For — Judy Powell, Parent Guidance Center (*Registered, but did not testify*); Allison Greer Francis, CHCS; Bill Kelly, Mayor’s Office City of Houston; Christine Yanas, Methodist Healthcare Ministries of South Texas, Inc.; Jordan Ghawi, STRAC; Hope Osborn, Texas 2036; Michelle Romero, Texas Medical Association; Ashley Ford, The Arc of Texas; Andrew Smith, University Health; Thomas Parkinson; Susan Stewart)
Against — None
On — Craig Howard, Health and Human Services Commission

BACKGROUND: Concerns have been raised that 2-1-1 Texas lacks sufficient efficiency, innovation, and system integration to connect people to important services.

DIGEST: HB 833 would require the housing and health services coordination council to complete and submit an evaluation of 2-1-1 services provided by the Texas Information and Referral Network to the Department of Housing and Community Affairs by August 1 of each year to help inform an expansion of service-enriched housing throughout the state. The evaluation would be required to consider data collection from user calls and website visits to determine the extent of use of 2-1-1 Texas services, demographic characteristics of users, existing needs of users, potential marketing needs, and comparisons with similar systems in other states.

The evaluation also would consider the database of the Texas Information and Referral Network with respect to:

- current integration status of statewide information, state agency resources, community resources, and regional and local information;
- the process of identifying new service providers and including those providers in the database;
- the monitoring of local organizations and state agencies to ensure those entities provided updated lists of resources to include in the database; and
- the ability to timely update emergency-related information into the database.

The housing and health services coordination council also would evaluate 2-1-1 user interviews and recommendations on a user's point-of-entry experience and satisfaction with any community resource information or referrals resulting from use of the service, and any other applicable user recommendations and referral outcome statistics. The council would consider 2-1-1 leadership interviews and recommendations on:

- technology and communication enhancements;
- measures designed to connect specialized populations with available state and local services;
- practices that supported area information centers to join with community partners for special projects that leveraged the 2-1-1 platform technology and system; and
- increasing innovation, efficiency, and system integration with state agencies and community partners.

The Texas Information and Referral Network would be required to work with the council to determine what de-identified information could be included in the evaluation to improve the provision of service-enriched housing.

In its biennial plan to implement goals to offer service-enriched housing, the council also would be required to improve the delivery of community resource information and referrals by considering the results of the

evaluations specified by the bill. The Department of Housing and Community Affairs could use funds from general revenue to contract for services on behalf of the council in relation to the council's duties.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2023.

NOTES:

According to the Legislative Budget Board, HB 833 would have a negative impact of \$700,000 through the biennium ending August 31, 2023, with similar costs in subsequent biennia.