

**SUBJECT:** Establishing school-based health care initiatives

**COMMITTEE:** Health Care Reform, Select — favorable, without amendment

**VOTE:** 8 ayes — Harless, Howard, Bucy, Frank, E. Morales, Price, Rose, Walle  
0 nays  
3 absent — Bonnen, Klick, Oliverson

**SENATE VOTE:** On final passage, (May 2) — 20 - 11

**WITNESSES:** For — Roma Bhatt, Legacy community health (*Registered, but did not testify*); Sebastien Laroche, Methodist Healthcare Ministries; Eli Melendrez, Texas American Federation of Teachers; Shelby Tracy, Texas Association of Community Health Centers; Suzi Kennon, Texas PTA; Katherine Schmader, Travis County Democratic Party; Tiffany Patterson, United Ways of Texas; Susana Carranza; Idona Griffith)  
  
Against — None  
  
On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Faith Sandberg-Rodriguez, Health and Human Services Commission)

**BACKGROUND:** Some have suggested that establishing school-based health care initiatives to help underserved Texas children obtain health care would improve education outcomes.

**DIGEST:** SB 1966 would require the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to establish and administer a grant program for health care organizations to implement, maintain, and expand a school-based health care initiative for underserved students and to provide those students with preventative and primary health care, including certain specified services. The grant program would be funded using legislative appropriations available for that purpose.

HHSC would be required to establish grant application procedures, criteria for evaluating applications and awarding grants, and procedures for monitoring the use of grants and ensuring compliance with any condition of a grant. A grant recipient would have to use the awarded grant money to establish a school-based health care initiative for a school district in which at least 50 percent of its students were uninsured or underinsured or received free or reduced-price lunches. A grant recipient could provide preventative and primary health care services under the program to a student younger than 18 years old only if the grant recipient obtained consent of the parent or legal guardian of the student.

HHSC could award a grant under the program only in accordance with a contract between HHSC and a grant recipient. The contract would have to include provisions granting HHSC sufficient control over the money awarded to ensure the public purpose of providing health care services to underserved students was accomplished and that Texas received the return benefit.

The provisions established by the bill would expire on the second anniversary of the date that all the money appropriated for the program was expended.

HHSC would be required to implement the bill only if the Legislature appropriated money for that purpose. If no money was appropriated, HHSC could, but would not be required to, implement the bill using other appropriations available for that purpose.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2023.

**NOTES:**

According to the Legislative Budget Board, SB 1966 would have a negative impact of \$685,743 through the biennium ending August 31, 2025.