

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

C.S.S.B. 644
By: Armbrister
Health & Human Services
3-20-97
Committee Report (Substituted)

DIGEST

Currently, out-of-state air ambulance providers are outside the regulation of the Texas EMS Act, and there is no action that can be taken by the state, regardless of the quality of equipment and care these ambulances provide. Historically, problems have arisen regarding reports of inadequate equipment and questionably trained personnel when patients have used this service. This legislation requires any rotor or fixed-wing aircraft used to transport a patient by stretcher, including out-of-state providers, to be licensed by the Texas Department of Health in an effort to ensure that all patients transported in Texas enjoy the same quality of care.

PURPOSE

As proposed, C.S.S.B. 644 establishes the regulation of certain air ambulance companies.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 773.045, Health and Safety Code, by amending Subsection (b), and adding Subsections (c) and (d), to provide that a rotor or fixed-wing aircraft and staff based in this state and used to transport a patient by stretcher is required to be licensed by the Texas Department of Health (department). Deletes the provision regarding a fixed-wing aircraft that advertises as an air ambulance service. Sets forth the terms by which an air ambulance company based in another state that transports patients from a point in this state is required to be licensed by the department as an emergency medical services provider. Requires the department to issue a license to such a company if the company applies as required by this chapter and has met the department's qualifications for safely transporting patients. Provides that an air ambulance company accredited by the Committee on Air Ambulance Medical Services is presumed to have met the department's qualifications. Sets forth the requirements regarding advertising by an air ambulance company.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 1997.

SECTION 3. Emergency clause.

SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE CHANGES

SECTION 1.

Amends Section 773.045(c), Health and Safety Code, by replacing the proposed phrase "on a flight that originates in this state" with the proposed phrase, "from a point in this state."