

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 93
By: Nelson
Health and Human Services
3/12/2001
As Filed

DIGEST AND PURPOSE

As proposed, S.B. 93 requires the Center for Rural Health Initiatives (center) to coordinate with various agencies to assist in evaluating existing telemedicine programs and policies, and it requires the center to ensure the appropriate development and use of telecommunications and technology in health care settings.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

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

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 106.025 (a), Health and Safety Code, by adding Subdivisions (18) - (20), to require the Center for Rural Health Initiatives (center) to develop a uniform definition for telemedicine that provides for the use of certain forms of advanced technology; ensure the appropriate development and use of telecommunications and technology in health care settings; and coordinate with various agencies to assist in evaluating telemedicine programs and policy.

SECTION 2. Amends Chapter 106, Health and Safety Code, by adding Subchapter H, as follows:

SUBCHAPTER H. RURAL HEALTH PROVIDERS

Section 106.251. DEFINITIONS. Defines "rural county."

Section 106.252. HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL RECRUITMENT PROGRAM.
Authorizes the center to use money appropriated to the center to make a grant to a rural county to recruit and retain health care professionals to work in the county.

SECTION 3. Amends Section 57.042 (11), Utilities Code, to redefine "telemedicine."

SECTION 4. Amends Section 531.0217, Government Code, to redefine "rural health facility."
Deletes language which sets parameters regarding which physicians could be reimbursed by Medicaid for telemedical consultations.

SECTION 5. Requires the Legislative Budget Board to prepare a cost analysis that projects the costs of including pharmacists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, and mental health providers in the list of health professionals eligible to receive Medicaid reimbursements for telemedicine services.

SECTION 6. Provides that if before implementing any provision of this Act the agency determines that a waiver or authorization from a federal agency is necessary, the affected agency is required to request the waiver or authorization and authorizes a delay in implementing that provision until the waiver or authorization is granted.

SECTION 7. Effective date: September 1, 2001.