

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
79R490 UM-D

S.B. 46
By: Nelson
Health & Human Services
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S/SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Currently, there are several health and human services (HHS) benefit programs, each with its own identification and validation mechanism. The state recently recognized similar duplication among its eligibility programs and undertook a significant project to consolidate eligibility.

As proposed, S.B. 46 encourages the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to consider combining the benefit delivery mechanism for multiple HHS benefit programs to gain cost-efficiencies. S.B. 46 allows HHSC to develop and implement an integrated benefits card to consolidate identification and benefits issuance for multiple HHS services if HHSC determines such a consolidation to be cost effective.

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 Subchapter B, Chapter 531, Government Code, by adding Section 531.080, as follows:

Sec. 531.080. UNIVERSAL SERVICES CARD. (a) Authorizes the Health and Human Services Commission (commission) to develop and implement a universal services card or other method to consolidate certain information for the commission and other health and human services agencies if the commission determines that the implementation would be feasible and cost-effective.

(b) Authorizes the universal services card, or other method, to incorporate, enable, and replace certain information.

SECTION 2. (a) Requires the commission to assess the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of using a universal services card, or other method, for consolidating recipient identification and benefits issuance for certain health and human services programs not later than January 1, 2006.

(b) Authorizes the commission to consider information obtained from certain agencies in conducting the assessment.

(c) Authorizes the commission to require any health and human services agency and the Department of Information Resources to assist the commission in performing its duties under this section.

SECTION 3. Requires the commission to report the findings of the assessment to the clerks of the standing committees of the senate and house of representatives having jurisdiction over health and human services issues not later than July 1, 2006.

SECTION 4. Authorizes delay of implementation until necessary federal waivers or authorizations are obtained.

SECTION 5. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2005.