

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 592
By: Van de Putte
Health & Human Services
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Texas has the third-highest teen birth rate in the nation. With 63 births for every 1,000 female teens 15-19 years of age, the state's rate is nearly 50 percent higher than the national average. In addition, Texas has the highest percentage (24 percent) of repeat teen births of any state in the nation. Undeniably, Texas' teen mothers are at high risk of a repeat pregnancy. The public cost of teen childbearing in Texas is estimated to be at least one billion dollars annually, the highest of any state. Reducing repeat teen pregnancy will reduce school dropout rates, child abuse, and infant mortality. Better access contraceptives helps to reduce the occurrence of closely spaced pregnancies, with the attendant high risk of babies being born prematurely and with low birth weight. Reducing the risk of unplanned early pregnancy also reduces the likelihood of abortion.

However, while minors can have children and can consent for their babies' care, Texas does not allow minors to access prescription contraceptives without parental consent to help plan their subsequent pregnancies.

As proposed, S.B. 592 authorizes a child to consent to medical, dental, psychological, and surgical treatment by a licensed physician or dentist, if the child is 16 years of age or older, is unmarried, is the mother of a child, and consents to examination or medical treatment, other than abortion or emergency contraception, related to contraception.

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 32.003(a), Family Code, as follows:

- (a) Authorizes a child to consent to medical, dental, psychological, and surgical treatment for the child by a licensed physician or dentist if the child consents to the diagnosis and treatment of an infectious, contagious, or communicable disease that is required by law or a rule to be reported by the licensed physician or dentist to a local health officer or the Department of State Health Services, rather than the Texas Department of Health, including all diseases within the scope of Section 81.041 (Reportable Diseases), Health and Safety Code; or if the child is 16 years of age or older, is unmarried, is the mother of a child, and consents to examination or medical treatment, other than abortion or emergency contraception, related to contraception.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2009.