

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

H.B. 3781
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Health & Human Services
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Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Texas faces many challenging health issues, including increasing rates of infectious diseases and high rates of preventable hospitalizations. Texas and the nation also face the dilemma of ever increasing and unsustainable costs of health care. To address these challenges, this bill would create the Texas Health Improvement Network (THIN).

THIN would consist of a network of diverse health professionals dedicated to developing initiatives and translating research on population health into health policy and best practices to reduce the per capita costs of health care, to improve the individual experience of care, including the quality of care and patient satisfaction, and to improve the health of Texas residents. The primary goals of THIN would be evaluating and eliminating health disparities in Texas, including racial, ethnic, geographic, and income-related or education-related disparities, and health care cost containment and the economic analysis of health policy.

THIN would consist of faculty of general academic and health-related public and private institutions of higher education in Texas with expertise in general public health and other medical fields, mental health, nursing, pharmacy, social work, health economics, health policy and law, epidemiology, biostatistics, health informatics, health services research, engineering, and computer science. The University of Texas System would be required to administer and coordinate THIN and provide administrative support as necessary to carry out the purposes of the bill's provisions.

H.B. 3781 requires THIN to establish an advisory council to advise it on Texas' health care needs and provides for the composition of the council. The bill sets out provisions relating to the council members' terms, the appointment of the presiding officer, meeting requirements, and member compensation and reimbursement.

The bill requires THIN to function as an incubator and evaluator of health improvement practices and to support local communities in Texas by offering leadership training, data analytics, community health assessments, and grant writing support to local communities. H.B. 3781 authorizes THIN to accept and administer gifts and grants to fund THIN from an individual, corporation, trust, or foundation or the federal government, subject to any limitations or conditions imposed by law. The bill authorizes money received by THIN to be used to fund demonstration and pilot projects using an established peer-reviewed award process and internships and other educational programs to prepare the health care workforce to improve population health. The bill requires THIN to give priority to funding projects that are multidisciplinary and offer multi-institutional collaboration. The bill requires THIN to report the results of its efforts, findings, and projects to the legislature, state and federal partners, and other interested entities.

H.B. 3781 amends current law relating to the creation of the Texas Health Improvement Network.

[**Note:** While the statutory reference in this bill is to the Texas Department of Health (TDH), the following amendments affect the Department of State Health Services, as the successor agency to TDH.]

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 Subtitle E, Title 2, Health and Safety Code, by adding Chapter 118, as follows:

CHAPTER 118. TEXAS HEALTH IMPROVEMENT NETWORK

SUBCHAPTER A. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Sec. 118.001. DEFINITION. Defines “network.”

SUBCHAPTER B. NETWORK

Sec. 118.051. ESTABLISHMENT; PURPOSE. (a) Provides that the Texas Health Improvement Network (network) is established to address urgent health care challenges and improve the health care system in this state and the nation and to develop, based on population health research, health care initiatives, policies, and best practices.

(b) Provides that the purpose of the network is to reduce the per capita costs of health care, improve the individual experience of health care, including the quality of care and patient satisfaction, and improve the health of residents of this state.

Sec. 118.052. COMPOSITION OF NETWORK. Provides that the network consists of faculty of general academic and health-related public and private institutions of higher education in this state with expertise in general public health and other medical fields, mental health, nursing, pharmacy, social work, health economics, health policy and law, epidemiology, biostatistics, health informatics, health services research, engineering, and computer science.

Sec. 118.053. DUTIES. (a) Requires the network to establish as its primary goals:

(1) evaluating and eliminating health disparities in this state, including racial, ethnic, geographic, and income-related or education-related disparities; and

(2) health care cost containment and the economic analysis of health policy.

(b) Requires the network to function as an incubator and evaluator of health improvement practices and to support local communities in this state by offering leadership training, data analytics, community health assessments, and grant writing support to local communities.

Sec. 118.054. ADMINISTRATIVE ATTACHMENT TO THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SYSTEM. (a) Provides that the network is administratively attached to The University of Texas System.

(b) Requires The University of Texas System to administer and coordinate the network and provide administrative support to the network as necessary to carry out the purposes of this chapter.

Sec. 118.055. GIFTS AND GRANTS. Authorizes the network to accept and administer gifts and grants to fund the network from an individual, corporation, trust, or foundation or the federal government, subject to any limitations or conditions imposed by law.

Sec. 118.056. REPORT. Requires the network to report the results of the network's efforts, findings, and activities to the legislature, state and federal partners, and other interested entities.

SUBCHAPTER C. ADVISORY COUNCIL

Sec. 118.101. ADVISORY COUNCIL. Requires the network to establish an advisory council to advise the network on the health care needs of this state.

Sec. 118.102. COMPOSITION OF ADVISORY COUNCIL. Provides that the advisory council is composed of:

(1) members who are appointed by an executive officer of The University of Texas System and nominated by participants in the network and who are state and national leaders in population health, experts in traditional public health and medical fields, and leaders in the fields of behavioral health, business, insurance, philanthropy, education, and health law and policy;

(2) representatives from each of the following entities, selected by an executive officer of the entity:

- (A) The University of Texas System;
- (B) The Texas A&M University System;
- (C) the University of North Texas System;
- (D) the Texas Tech University System; and
- (E) the Baylor College of Medicine; and

(3) representatives from the Texas Department of Health and the Health and Human Services Commission, selected by the executive head of the agency.

Sec. 118.103. TERMS. Provides that members of the advisory council serve staggered three-year terms, with the terms of one-third of the members expiring on January 1 of each year.

Sec. 118.104. PRESIDING OFFICER. Requires the executive officer of The University of Texas System who appoints members to the advisory council to appoint a presiding officer from among the members to serve a one-year term.

Sec. 118.105. MEETINGS. Requires the advisory council to meet at the call of the presiding officer or at other times that the advisory council determines are necessary or appropriate.

Sec. 118.106. COMPENSATION AND REIMBURSEMENT. Prohibits a member of the advisory council from receiving compensation for service on the advisory council but provides that a member of the advisory council may be reimbursed for travel expenses incurred by the member while conducting the business of the advisory council, if funds are available for that purpose, as provided by the General Appropriations Act.

Sec. 118.107. APPLICABILITY OF OTHER LAW. Provides that Chapter 2110 (State Agency Advisory Committees), Government Code, does not apply to the advisory council.

SECTION 2. Requires The University of Texas System to establish the Texas Health Improvement Network as required by Chapter 118, Health and Safety Code, as added by this Act, as soon as practicable after the effective date of this Act.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2015.