

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
86R2799 GCB-D

H.B. 4559
By: Fierro (Rodríguez)
Criminal Justice
5/16/2019
Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Many prisoners in county jails receive mental health services and, regardless of whether a prisoner is covered by private health insurance, the cost of the services is borne by taxpayers and organizations like local mental health authorities. However, even organizations fully equipped to bill for services and manage that process as part of a developed revenue cycle cannot because they lack that authority in the context of county jails.

H.B. 4559 seeks to address this issue by providing for the payment of such services by an insurance issuer to help shift the burden of mental health costs for insured prisoners away from taxpayers and such organizations.

H.B. 4559 amends current law relating to access to a county jail prisoner's health benefits coverage information for mental health service providers.

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 Chapter 511, Government Code, by adding Section 511.0098, as follows:

Sec. 511.0098. PRISONER HEALTH BENEFITS COVERAGE INFORMATION; PAYMENT FOR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES. (a) Requires the Texas Commission on Jail Standards to adopt procedures by which a local mental health authority or other mental health services provider providing services to a prisoner in a county jail under a contract with the county is authorized to collect the following from a prisoner who receives those services and is covered by health insurance or other health benefits coverage:

- (1) the name of the policyholder or group contract holder;
- (2) the number of the policy or evidence of coverage;
- (3) a copy of the health coverage membership card, if available; and
- (4) any other information necessary for the prisoner to obtain benefits under the coverage.

(b) Authorizes a local mental health authority or other mental health services provider who provides mental health services to a prisoner under a contract with a county to arrange for the issuer of the health insurance policy or other health benefits coverage to pay for those services.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2019.