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TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Weekly Newsletter
May 14, 2013 Hearing

Bills Considered by Chairman Raymond's Committee

SB 44: Reporting in Child Abuse and Neglect Cases

Author: Sen. Judith Zaffirini, et al.

House Sponsor: Rep. Cindy Burkett

The purpose of SB 44 is to exempt parents whose sole purpose for relinquishment of their parental rights is to obtain mental health services for their child from Texas's abuse and neglect registry. Additionally, if a parent's name was previously and/or wrongfully added to the "refused to accept parental responsibility" list, parents will also have the right to petition the family court that held the custody hearing to have their name removed from the registry if the only reason the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) took custody was to obtain mental health services for the child.



SB 66: Relating to the Child Fatality Review Team Committee

Author: Sen. Jane Nelson

House Sponsor: Rep. Jodie Laubenberg

SB 66 adds an emergency medical services provider and a provider of services to, or advocate for, victims of family violence to the State Child Fatality Review Team Committee (committee); clarifies the committee's

role; and changes the committee's reporting requirement from annual to biennial. SB 66 amends current law relating to the child fatality review team committee.

SB 913: Reexamination of an Applicant for a Professional Counselor License

Author: Sen. Eddie Lucio

House Sponsor: Rep. Elliott Naishtat



Under current law, applicants for licensure as a professional counselor can take the licensing examination two times and then may not reapply for another examination for two years. Texas contracts with the National Board for Counselor Certification (NBCC) to administer the licensing examination. NBCC allows all other candidates to take the test three times before they must sit out and take additional coursework. NBCC advises that aligning Texas's standards will result in consistency with other states and NBCC and, as a result, increase administrative efficiency.

SB 913 changes Section 503.307(b), Occupations Code, so as to allow an applicant to attempt to pass the licensing examination three times. Under the bill, should an applicant fail three successive examinations, they may not reapply before the second anniversary of the date of the last failed examination. The bill retains current law which states that applicants may alternatively complete nine graduate semester hours in the applicant's weakest portion of the examination.

SB 993: Relating to the Creation of the Texas Nonprofit Council

Author: Sen. Bob Deuell

House Sponsor: Rep. Susan King

HB 1965, 82nd Legislature, Regular Session, 2011, established a task force on improving relations between state government and nonprofits. The task force included representatives from a statewide nonprofit organization, local governments, faith-based groups, community-based groups, consultants to nonprofit corporations, experts in grant writing, and a statewide association of nonprofit organizations. The task force was charged to develop and implement a plan for improving contracting relationships between state agencies and faith- and community-based organizations; develop best practices for cooperating and collaborating with faith- and community-based organizations; identify and address duplication of services provided by the state and faith- and community-based organizations; and identify and address gaps in state services that faith- and community-based organizations could fill.



The task force has achieved many of its goals and issued a report last year that was well-received. However, its authorization expires in September of 2013. SB 993 makes the task force permanent and renames it "The Texas Nonprofit Council."

SB 1542: Clinical Initiatives to Improve the Medicaid Program

Author: Sen. Leticia Van de Putte

House Sponsor: Rep. John Zerwas



Rapid scientific and technological advances are being made within the practice of health care that affect the care and treatment of numerous conditions and ailments. Advances in the treatments of preventable and chronic conditions, such as sepsis or septicemia, are developing at such a rapid pace that it is becoming increasingly difficult for the state to track, monitor, and incorporate those new treatments into the Medicaid program. As a result, it can become more difficult to control the growing costs of health care services and to ensure that the highest-quality level of care is promoted,

practiced, and monitored within the program. SB 1542 seeks to address this issue by establishing a Medicaid quality improvement process within the Health and Human Services Commission to review clinical initiatives designed to improve the quality of care provided under and cost-effectiveness of the Medicaid program.

SB 1150: Medicaid Provider Protection Plan

Author: Sen. Juan Hinojosa

House Sponsors: Rep. Bobby Guerra and Chairman Richard Peña Raymond

The Medicaid managed care system in Texas has brought some cost certainty to the state. However, as Medicaid managed care has transformed from a regional program into a statewide model the need from some modernization has become clear. This legislation makes reforms to the program that will allow for increased efficiency and enhanced provider engagement and protection. SB 1150 adds protections to Medicaid health care providers. These protections include prompt payment and reimbursement, prompt credentialing, and "red tape" elimination.

SB 1758: Establishment of a Task Force on DFPS Hiring and Management

Author: Sen. Carlos Uresti

House Sponsor: Rep. John Zerwas

The Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) continues to experience high turnover rates among Child Protective Services (CPS) caseworkers in Texas. Several studies, including the 2012 Senate Health and Human Services Committee Interim Report, have shown a myriad of factors contributing to high caseworker turnover, including unmanageable workloads and caseloads, lack of supportive supervision, high-stress levels, long hours, low unit cohesion and morale, and a lower quality of assistance.

A photograph of a job application form titled "JOB APPLICATION FORM". The form includes instructions: "Please complete this accurately, giving as many details as possible of your skills and the job application." and "Please either type directly in this form using or print out and complete the form in blue CAPITALS." Below the instructions are three input fields: "EMPLOYER/EMPLOYER PHONE", "Job title:", and "Department/Region:". The form is placed on a surface with a keyboard visible in the background.

SB 1758 creates a task force to examine the hiring and management practices of DFPS in an effort to develop strategies that will identify issues within DFPS that have led to high turnover and develop strategies and methods to reduce turnover and improve outcomes for children. The task force will be composed of external business chief executive officers, expert labor consultants, human resource leaders, other innovators, and CPS program staff to design a performance-based compensation and recognition system to improve the hiring and retention of CPS caseworkers. Other recommendations include hiring ahead for caseworkers, streamlining administrative tasks, identifying and replicating best practices, and

allowing flexible schedules as methods to solve the issues leading to high CPS turnover rates.

SB 1836: Relating to the Funding of the Texas Home Visiting Program

Author: Sen. Bob Deuell



SB 1836 seeks to provide badly needed funding for the Texas Home Visiting Program through a voluntary check off that will allow persons to give at the time they apply for, pay a county clerk fee for, or request a copy of a birth certificate, marriage license, or divorce decree.

SB 1836 amends current law relating to the funding of the Texas Home Visiting Program and authorizes voluntary contributions.

Bills Voted Out of Committee

SB 1758: Relating to the establishment of a task force to examine hiring and management practices of the Department of Family and Protective Services.

Author: Sen. Carlos Uresti

SB 1836: Relating to the funding of the Texas Home Visiting Program; authorizing voluntary contributions.

Author: Sen. Bob Deuell

SB 44: Relating to maintaining and reporting certain information regarding certain child abuse or neglect cases and the provision of mental health services for children in those cases.

Authors: Sen. Judith Zaffirini and Sen. Royce West

SB 66: Relating to the child fatality review team committee.

Author: Sen. Jane Nelson

SB 913: Relating to the reexamination of an applicant for a professional counselor license.

Author: Sen. Eddie Lucio

SB 1542: Relating to clinical initiatives to improve the quality of care and cost-effectiveness of the Medicaid program.

Author: Sen. Leticia Van de Putte

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