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Gov. Perry Vetoes HB 103

June 19, 2009

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS SHALL COME:

Pursuant to Article IV, Section 14 of the Texas Constitution, I, Rick Perry, Governor of Texas, do hereby disapprove of and veto House Bill No. 103 of the 81st Texas Legislature, Regular Session, due to the following objections:

House Bill No. 103 amends current law relating to student health benefit plan provisions at public institutions of higher education and health benefit plan operations through student health centers (SHCs).

The bill requires general academic teaching institutions with more than 20,000 enrolled students to offer one or more health benefit plans, at least one of which must be a high-deductible plan.

House Bill No. 103 also requires these institutions to accept and process private health insurance at SHCs. SHCs must file insurance claims for covered individuals. The institutions may contract with a third-party billing service to provide assistance.

While I appreciate the author's intent to increase efficiency in our universities' health care systems, House Bill No. 103 would likely increase health service costs for college students and their families without increasing the level of service or care. Currently, SHCs may file claims for students with private health insurance, but choose not to do so because of the high cost associated with filing claims with the large number of health plans that serve students. Since most SHCs do not have the administrative and technical capacity required to do insurance billing, SHCs would need to increase staff or contract this service to a third-party administrator; either option would needlessly increase costs to students.

SHCs are designed to provide limited basic care services to students at low cost. Combined with a mandatory fee and inexpensive office visits, SHCs have been effective in helping students with their basic medical needs.

Delivering reasonable health care to students is important, but House Bill No. 103 would precipitate a significant departure from current practices at SHCs without appreciably improving student health or access to care. Before undertaking such a dramatic shift in the administration of these services, we owe it to students and their families to take a closer look at the overall impact. Therefore, I am recommending that the lieutenant governor and speaker of the House conduct an interim study to review this issue.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have signed my name officially and caused the Seal of the State to be affixed hereto at Austin, this the 19th day of June, 2009.

RICK PERRY

Governor of Texas

ATTESTED BY:
COBY SHORTER, III
Deputy Secretary of State

For a detailed view of this bill, visit <http://www.legis.state.tx.us/BillLookup/History.aspx?LegSess=81R&Bill=HB103>.