

- SUBJECT:** Transferring the administration of the Irma Rangel School of Pharmacy
- COMMITTEE:** Higher Education — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 8 ayes — Morrison, Goolsby, Dawson, Gallego, Giddings, Harper-Brown, J. Jones, Rose
- 0 nays
- 1 absent — F. Brown
- WITNESSES:** No public hearing
- BACKGROUND:** In 2001, the 77th Legislature provided initial funding to construct a college of pharmacy at Texas A&M University – Kingsville. The university borrowed approximately \$3 million in funds from the Texas A&M University System to complete construction. The building for the school was completed in July 2005. In 2003, the 78th Legislature named the school for the late Rep. Irma Rangel of Kingsville.
- For fiscal 2006-07, the university requested, but the 79th Legislature did not appropriate, \$13 million for operation of the pharmacy school and \$3.1 million to restore to the Texas A&M System funding it provided for the school’s start-up funds. In September 2005, Gov. Perry proposed using budget execution authority to provide \$10 million for operating expenses to open the school, but the Legislative Budget Board did not act on the governor's proposal. In March 2006, the Texas A&M Health Science Center agreed to contribute \$6 million to open the school for classes starting this fall, and the Texas A&M Board of Regents transferred management of the Rangel School from Texas A&M-Kingsville to the Health Science Center.
- DIGEST:** HB 154 would transfer the administration of the Irma Rangel School of Pharmacy from Texas A&M University – Kingsville to the Texas A&M University System Health Science Center. It would allow the Texas A&M University System Board to maintain the school in Kleberg County as a component of the Texas A&M University Health Science Center and would repeal the authorization of the Texas A&M University System

Board to maintain the school as part of the Texas A&M University – Kingsville.

The bill would require the school to be known as the Irma Rangel School of Pharmacy and would authorize the facility to offer courses and degrees that are comparable to other colleges of pharmacy.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2006.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

By formally transferring the management of the Irma Rangel School of Pharmacy at Texas A&M – Kingsville to the Texas A&M Health Science Center, HB 154 would allow the Texas A&M System to access funding that would not have been available if the school had remained a stand-alone program. The bill simply would revise the statutory authorization for the Rangel School to reflect what already has occurred

The new school, named for the late Rep. Irma Rangel of Kingsville, will help the state respond to the shortage of pharmacists in the border region while providing a valuable educational opportunity for many residents of South Texas. Opening the school will come as welcome news to more than 1,000 applicants who hope to gain admission to the initial class of 70 students.

In addition, the school of pharmacy is expected to bring economic gains to the region. The school is likely to attract significant investment in drug research because the Kingsville area is ideally located to host drug studies for the treatment of diabetes and hypertension.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

No apparent opposition.

NOTES:

The companion bill, SB 42 by Lucio, has been referred to the Senate Education Subcommittee on Higher Education. SB 16 by Ogden, an omnibus supplemental appropriations bill, would appropriate \$5 million for fiscal 2007 to the Texas A&M Health Science Center to operate the Irma Rangel School of Pharmacy. The Senate Finance Committee considered SB 16 in a public hearing on April 24 and left the bill pending.