

SUBJECT: Requiring HHSC to provide immunization information to EMS personnel

COMMITTEE: Public Health — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 9 ayes — S. Thompson, Wray, Coleman, Frank, Guerra, Lucio, Price,
Sheffield, Zedler

0 nays

2 absent — Allison, Ortega

WITNESSES: For — Ray Callas, Texas Medical Association, Texas Public Health
Coalition; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Bill Kelly, Jamaal Smith, City
of Houston Mayor's Office; Aimee Bertrand, Harris County
Commissioners Court; Christine Yanas, Methodist Healthcare Ministries
of South Texas, Inc.; Sara Gonzalez, Texas Hospital Association; Andrew
Cates, Texas Nurses Association; Rekha Lakshmanan, The Immunization
Partnership)

Against — None

On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Imelda Garcia and Stephen Pahl,
Department of State Health Services)

BACKGROUND: The Department of State Health Services (DSHS) maintains the Texas
immunization registry, also known as ImmTrac2. Health and Safety Code
sec. 161.00706 allows emergency medical services personnel, including
hospital emergency facility staff, to store their medically verified
immunization information in the registry.

DIGEST: HB 1418 would require the Health and Human Services Commission
(HHSC) to provide immunization information to applicants for
certification or recertification as emergency medical services personnel.

The commission would be required to provide an applicant with written
notice of the applicant's immunization history if that information was in

the state's immunization registry. If the applicant's information was not in the registry, HHSC would be required to provide the applicant with details about the registry as well as the specific risks to emergency medical services personnel when responding rapidly to an emergency of exposure to and infection by a potentially serious disease that could be prevented by an immunization.

The executive commissioner of HHSC would be required to adopt by rule a system for providing this information. Rules necessary for the implementation of the system would be required to be adopted as soon as practicable after the effective date of the bill.

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, 2019.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

HB 1418 would protect first responders by ensuring that emergency medical personnel had up-to-date information on their immunization status. This would be particularly beneficial during disasters, when first responders could be exposed to communicable but preventable diseases.

During Hurricane Harvey, many first responders were not aware of their immunization status, which put them, their families, and their communities at risk of exposure to serious communicable diseases. By making immunization information and reminders readily available to emergency medical personnel during the certification process, HB 1418 would help protect the health and safety of medical personnel and other first responders.

First responders are already able to store their immunization information in the state's secure and confidential registry. HB 1418 would ensure that information already stored in the registry was provided to applicants for certification or recertification as emergency medical personnel. If an applicant's information was not already in the registry, the bill simply would provide information to EMS personnel about the risk of exposure

to communicable diseases.

OPPONENTS No concerns identified.
SAY: