

- SUBJECT:** Allowing DSHS to collect voluntary information on maternal deaths
- COMMITTEE:** Public Health — favorable, with amendment
- VOTE:** 9 ayes — S. Thompson, Wray, Allison, Frank, Guerra, Lucio, Ortega, Price, Sheffield
- 0 nays
- 2 absent — Coleman, Zedler
- SENATE VOTE:** On final passage, April 11 — 31-0, on Local and Uncontested Calendar
- WITNESSES:** No public hearing
- BACKGROUND:** Tax Code ch. 323 establishes the County Sales and Use Tax Act, which governs the administration of sales and use taxes in counties. Tax Code ch. 26 excludes certain cities', counties', and hospital districts' additional sales and use taxes from certain property tax assessment provisions.
- Interested parties note that the U.S. Congress passed into law the Preventing Maternal Deaths Act in 2018, making certain federal grants available to states for the purpose of reviewing pregnancy-related and pregnancy-associated deaths in maternal mortality review committees. They also note that certain changes are required to align Texas law with the requirements in the new federal legislation.
- DIGEST:** SB 2150, as amended, would add a statutory definition of pregnancy-associated death and authorize the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) to allow voluntary and confidential reporting of certain pregnancy-related and pregnancy-associated deaths by certain health care professionals and family members. The bill also would change the name of the Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Task Force to the Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Review Committee and allow DSHS to use federal funding or grant money to reimburse members of the review committee for travel expenses.

Reporting. DSHS could allow voluntary and confidential reporting of pregnancy-associated and pregnancy-related deaths by health care professionals, health care facilities, and persons who completed the medical certification for a death certificate for deaths reviewed or analyzed by the review committee.

DSHS would be required to allow voluntary and confidential reporting of pregnancy-associated and pregnancy-related deaths by family members of or other appropriate individuals associated with a deceased patient. DSHS would have to:

- post on its website the contact information of the person to whom a report could be submitted; and
- conduct outreach to local health organizations on the availability of the review committee to review and analyze these deaths.

Licensed health care providers who were involved in obtaining information relevant to a case of pregnancy-associated death, pregnancy-related death, or severe maternal morbidity and who were otherwise required to report a violation related to the provider's profession would be exempt from the requirement to report the violation for information obtained under the bill. Information reported to DSHS under this bill would be confidential.

Midland County Hospital District. SB 2150, as amended, would authorize the Midland County Hospital District to adopt, change the rate of, or abolish a sales and use tax at an election held in the district. The bill would prohibit the district from adopting or increasing a tax if as a result the combined rate of all sales and use taxes in the district would exceed 2 percent. Revenue collected from a tax imposed under the bill could be used by the Midland County Hospital District for any purpose of the district authorized by law.

The bill would establish election procedures, a tax effective date, and other provisions governing the tax rate and a tax election of the district.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2019.

NOTES:

The committee amendment would allow the Midland County Hospital District to impose a sales and use tax and make other conforming changes in Special District Local Laws Code ch. 1061 and Tax Code ch. 26.