

**SUBJECT:** Continuing a health care provider participation program

**COMMITTEE:** County Affairs — committee substitute recommended

**VOTE:** 8 ayes — Neave Criado, Stucky, Gerdes, J. Jones, Orr, Rosenthal, Schatzline, Slaton

1 nays — Tinderholt

**WITNESSES:** For — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Christina Hoppe, Children’s Hospital Association of Texas; Elisa M. Tamayo, El Paso County; Michael Nuñez, El Paso County Hospital District; Juliana Cruz Kerker, HCA Healthcare; Jessica Schleifer, Teaching Hospitals of Texas; Michelle Apodaca, Tenet; Jennifer Banda, Texas Hospital Association)

Against — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Henry Bohnert)

On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Victoria Grady, Texas Health and Human Services Commission)

**BACKGROUND:** The 86th Legislature authorized the El Paso County Hospital District (EPCHD) to establish a health care provider program that would expire on December 31, 2023 if not extended with legislation. Some have suggested that this program has been a successful funding mechanism for providing needed medical care to the El Paso area and that it should be continued.

**DIGEST:** CSHB 1621 would continue EPCHD's authority to operate and administer the health care provider program until December 31, 2027. The bill also would authorize the hospital district to impose and collect interest and penalties on delinquent mandatory payments in any amount that did not exceed the maximum amount authorized for other delinquent payments owed to the district.

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, 2023.

