

SUBJECT:	Amending procedures for medical consultations in certain investigations
COMMITTEE:	Human Services — favorable, without amendment
VOTE:	7 ayes — Frank, Campos, Hull, Klick, Manuel, Noble, Shaheen 2 nays — Rose, Ramos
WITNESSES:	For — Judy Powell, Parent Guidance Center; Andrew Brown, Texas Public Policy Foundation; Ajshay James (<i>Registered, but did not testify</i> : Meagan Corser, Family Freedom Project; Thomas Parkinson) Against — Marjan Linnell, Texas Pediatric Society On — (<i>Registered, but did not testify</i> : Stephen Black, Marta Talbert, DFPS)
BACKGROUND:	Concerns have been raised that more transparency is needed regarding medical determinations during child abuse and neglect investigations.
DIGEST:	HB 475 would require the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) to refer specialty medical consultations or forensic assessments for an abuse or neglect investigation to a physician who was not involved in reviewing the case, including as a member of a review team or multidisciplinary team. Before referring a child’s case for specialty consultation, DFPS would be required to give all medical records and certain related information used for the investigation to the child’s parent or legal guardian, or the parent or legal guardian’s attorney. DFPS and referring providers could not prevent the parent, legal guardian, or attorney from obtaining all medical records and documentation necessary to request an alternative opinion, including access to the child for that purpose. The bill would take effect September 1, 2023.