

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

H.B. 1124
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Health & Human Services
5/11/2001
Engrossed

DIGEST AND PURPOSE

In rural areas, health care practitioner recruitment and retention rates are significantly lower than those in urban and suburban areas, creating a shortage of physicians, nurses, and therapists for residents in rural areas. Identifying young people from those areas with an interest in a health care career is one path to effectuating change. Supporting a young person's interest in a health care profession may help to reinforce and cultivate those interests and lead to his or her willingness to practice in a rural setting in the future. H.B. 1124 establishes a community healthcare awareness and mentoring program to identify, encourage, and support potential health care professionals from rural and underserved urban areas.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Chapter 106, Health and Safety Code, by adding Subchapter H, as follows:

SUBCHAPTER H. COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE AWARENESS AND MENTORING PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS

Sec. 106.251. DEFINITIONS. Defines "health care professional," "program," and "underserved urban area."

Sec. 106.252. COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE AWARENESS AND MENTORING PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS. (a) Requires the executive committee of the Center for Rural Health Initiatives (executive committee) to establish a community healthcare awareness and mentoring program for students to perform certain functions.

(b) Requires that in connection with the program, the Center for Rural Health Initiatives (center) establish and maintain an updated medical resource library that contains information relating to medical careers. Requires the center to make the library available to school counselors, students, and parents of students.

Sec. 106.253. ADMINISTRATION. (a) Requires the center to administer or contract for the administration of the program.

(b) Authorizes the center to solicit and accept gifts, grants, donations, and contributions to support the program.

(c) Authorizes the center to administer the program in cooperation with other public and private entities.

(d) Requires the center to coordinate the program with similar programs, including

programs relating to workforce development, scholarships for education, and employment of students, that are administered by other agencies, such as the Texas Workforce Commission and local workforce development boards.

Sec. 106.254. GRANTS; ELIGIBILITY. (a) Requires the executive committee, subject to available funds, to develop and implement, as a component of the program, a grant program to support employment opportunities in rural and underserved urban areas in this state for students participating in training or educational programs to become health care professionals.

(b) Requires that in awarding grants under the program, the executive committee give first priority to grants to training or educational programs that provide internships to students.

(c) Requires a person to meet certain requirements to be eligible to receive a grant under the grant program.

(d) Requires that as a condition of receiving a grant under the program the student agree to repay the amount of the grant, plus a penalty in an amount established by rule of the executive committee not to exceed two times the amount of the grant, if the student becomes licensed as a health care professional and fails to practice or work for at least one year as a health care professional in a rural or underserved urban area in this state.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2001.