

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

H.B. 1574
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Health & Human Services
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Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The term "autism spectrum disorder" (ASD) encompasses five different disorders: autistic disorder, pervasive developmental disorder, Rett's disorder, Asperger's disorder, and childhood disintegrated disorder. Children and adults with ASD display varying degrees of social skills, speech, communication, and repetitive behaviors and patterns. Children with ASD not only develop differently from children without ASD, but develop irregularly compared with one another.

According to the Autism Society of America, ASD is one of the fastest growing developmental disabilities and the cost of care is about \$90 billion annually. The Autism Society of America estimates that the cost of ASD care could be reduced by two-thirds with early diagnosis and proper intervention. This bill would establish a program to aid children and adults affected by ASD, as well as their families. The Autism Spectrum Disorders Resource Program will provide information, training, and aid to all who are touched by ASD.

H.B. 1574 amends current law relating to services for persons with autism and other pervasive developmental disorders and their families.

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 114, Human Resources Code, by adding Section 114.013, as follows:

Sec. 114.013. AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS RESOURCE CENTER. (a) Requires the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to establish and administer an autism spectrum disorders resource center (center) to coordinate resources for individuals with autism and other pervasive developmental disorders and their families. Requires HHSC, in establishing and administering the center, to consult with the Texas Council on Autism and Pervasive Developmental Disorders (council) and coordinate with appropriate state agencies, including each agency represented on the council.

(b) Requires HHSC to design the center to collect and distribute information and research regarding autism and other pervasive developmental disorders; conduct training and development activities for persons who may interact with an individual with autism or another pervasive developmental disorder in the course of their employment, including school, medical, or law enforcement personnel; coordinate with local entities that provide services to an individual with autism or another pervasive developmental disorder; and provide support for families affected by autism and other pervasive developmental disorders.

SECTION 2. (a) Requires the executive commissioner of HHSC (executive commissioner) to conduct a study to determine the costs and benefits to this state of initiating a pilot program to provide services to adult persons with autism and other related disabilities with similar support needs.

(b) Provides that the study will determine the costs and benefits of a pilot program based on a program designed to encourage sustainable employment and community integration through specialized supports coordination, case management, vocational assessment, training, and support to increase job skills and competitive employment opportunities; develop meaningful community-based activities for persons for whom competitive employment is not a goal; promote continued individual development and avoid regression; promote self-determination and independence; coordinate services and behavioral supports across all areas of need; and allow for flexible funding and for a flexible array of services to meet individual needs.

(c) Requires the executive commissioner, in conducting the study, to define and describe a pilot program with a seamless system of supports to provide options for independent living, if appropriate; community-based housing, if needed; and individualized supports, including prevocational training, employment training, and leisure and recreational activities; research and analyze best practices and programs from other states that may serve as pilot program models; consult with and solicit feedback from key stakeholders, including advocacy organizations, potential service recipients, and parents; address the barriers that may prevent adults with autism or other related disabilities with similar support needs from living in their local community including housing needs and living arrangements, behavioral services, social and communication services and supports, transportation issues, and health and medical care; identify the existence and cause of service gaps in this state; develop recommendations and determine costs associated with eliminating service gaps; identify the potential benefit to persons who would receive services from the pilot program; and identify potential federal sources of funding for a pilot program.

(d) Requires the executive commissioner, not later than September 1, 2010, to submit a report of the findings and conclusions of the study to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, and the presiding officers of the standing committees of the senate and house of representatives with primary jurisdiction over the provision of services to persons with disabilities.

(e) Requires that the report required under Subsection (d) of this section include a recommendation for the structure of a pilot program; a recommendation on the choice of an appropriate agency to design and administer a pilot program; an estimation of the number of persons who may benefit from a pilot program if a program similar to the pilot program were instituted statewide; an estimation of the potential costs of the pilot program and whether the pilot program may lead to savings; a method of determining which persons would be eligible to participate in the pilot program; and which Medicaid waiver programs are appropriate to the pilot program and whether new Medicaid waiver programs may be required.

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 2009.