

SUBJECT: Permitting the Hemophilia Assistance Program to pay insurance premiums

COMMITTEE: Insurance — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 7 ayes — Smithee, G. Bonnen, Morrison, Muñoz, Sheets, Taylor, C. Turner

0 nays

2 absent — Eiland, Creighton

WITNESSES: For — Susan Swindle, Texas Bleeding Disorders Coalition; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Chad Fredericksen, Texas Bleeding Disorders Coalition; Vlasta Hakes, Grifols; Patricia Kolodzey, Texas Medical Association; David Marwitz, Texas Pharmacy Association; Clayton Travis, Texans Care for Children)

Against — none

On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Steven Browning, Texas Health Insurance Pool; Doug Danzeiser, Texas Department of Insurance; Carol Labaj, Department of State Health Services; Jann Melton-Kissel, Department of State Health Services)

BACKGROUND: Hemophilia is a genetically inherited bleeding disorder most commonly treated through intravenous injections of clotting factor. Health and Safety Code, ch. 41 establishes the Hemophilia Assistance Program (HAP) within the Department of State Health Services to provide financial assistance to individuals unable to pay the entire cost of their treatment.

HAP currently provides a maximum benefit of \$25,000 per recipient and has funding to assist about 11 individuals. Health and Safety Code, sec. 41.002 limits HAP's financial assistance to obtaining clotting factor and other similar treatment substances.

DIGEST: HB 2533 would permit the Department of State Health Services to include within the HAP program insurance premium payment assistance for eligible individuals.

The bill would specify that a person 18 years of age or older would be eligible for HAP, provided they met all other eligibility criteria.

HB 2533 would prevent an individual's receipt of benefits through the Texas Health Insurance Pool (THIP), sometimes known as the "risk pool," from disqualifying them from HAP assistance. Conversely, the bill would prevent an individual's receipt of HAP assistance from disqualifying them from THIP insurance coverage.

HB 2533 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, 2013.