

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 1351
By: Barrientos
State Affairs
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As Filed

DIGEST

Currently, the federal government provides the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), which offers health insurance for children in economically disadvantaged families who cannot afford health coverage. Federal guidelines make children of state employees ineligible for CHIP. S.B. 1351 provides a comparable plan for children of state employees who would otherwise be eligible for health insurance under CHIP and for eligible children of certain public university systems.

PURPOSE

As proposed, S.B. 1351 requires health benefits plan coverage for children of certain employees paid by state appropriated money.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

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

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Article 3.50-2, Insurance Code (The Texas Employees Uniform Group Insurance Benefit Act), by adding Section 14A, as follow:

Sec. 14A. COVERAGE FOR DEPENDENT CHILDREN OF CERTAIN EMPLOYEES. Requires a trustee of the Board of Trustees of the Employees Retirement System of Texas, subject to any applicable limit in the General Appropriations Act, to use money appropriated for employer contributions to fund basic coverage for a child who meets certain requirements. Prohibits the employee from being required to contribute any amount towards coverage provided under Section (a) of this section. Requires the trustee to identify employees who may be eligible for dependent child coverage under Subsection (a) and notify the employee of certain conditions. Requires an employee who desires dependent child coverage under this section to apply to the Texas Department of Human Services (TDHS) or other agency designated by the Health and Human Services Commission (commission) to perform eligibility screening under this section. Requires the eligibility screening to be coordinated with eligibility screening for the state Medicaid program. Requires the agency that performs the eligibility screening to certify to the trustee in writing whether a child is eligible for dependent child coverage under Subsection (a) for this section. Requires the trustee to ensure that, under any contract implementing the basic coverage under this Act, a determination that a dependant child is eligible for coverage under Subsection (a) of this section is a change in status that entitles the employee to enroll the child in the coverage without regard to any enrollment period requirement that would otherwise be applicable.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 15(b), Article 3.50-2, Insurance Code, to authorize the state to contribute a greater amount for coverage for dependent children described by Section 14A(a) of this Act than the state contributes for group coverage for other dependent children.

SECTION 3. Amends Article 3.50-3, Insurance Code (The Texas State College and University Employees Uniform Insurance Benefits Act) by adding Section 17A, as follows:

Sec. 17A. COVERAGE FOR DEPENDENT CHILDREN OF CERTAIN EMPLOYEES. Requires an institution, subject to any applicable limit in the General Appropriations Act, to use money appropriated for employer contributions to fund basic coverage for a child who meets certain requirements. Prohibits the employee from being required to contribute any amount

towards coverage provided under Section (a) of this section. Requires the institution to identify employees who may be eligible for dependent child coverage under Subsection (a) and notify the employee of certain conditions. Requires an employee who desires dependent child coverage under this section to apply to the Texas Department of Human Services (TDHS) or other agency designated by the Health and Human Services Commission (commission) to perform eligibility screening under this section. Requires the eligibility screening to be coordinated with eligibility screening for the state Medicaid program. Requires the agency that performs the eligibility screening to certify to the trustee in writing whether a child is eligible for dependent child coverage under Subsection (a) for this section. Requires the institution to ensure that, under any contract implementing the basic coverage under this Act, a determination that a dependant child is eligible for coverage under Subsection (a) of this section is a change in status that entitles the employee to enroll the child in the coverage without regard to any enrollment period requirement that would otherwise be applicable.

SECTION 4. Amends Section 13, Article 3.50-3, Insurance Code, to authorize the state to contribute a greater amount for coverage for dependent children described by Section 17A(a) of this Act than the state contributes for group coverage for other dependent children. Makes conforming changes.

SECTION 5. Emergency clause.

Effective date: upon passage.