

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
78R5215 KLA-F

S.B. 1615
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Health & Human Services
4/10/2003
As Filed

DIGEST AND PURPOSE

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act prohibits recipients of federally funded assistance from being excluded from or discriminated against based on race, color, or national origin. The Office of Civil Rights states that in order to be in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, consumers of federally funded assistance programs should be provided information in the language of their understanding. As proposed, S.B. 1615 requires the Health and Human Services Commission to create an interpreter services pilot program for Medicaid recipients. Matching funds will be contributed by local government entities.

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 32B, Human Resources Code, by adding Section 32.061, as follows:

Sec. 32.061. LANGUAGE INTERPRETER SERVICES PILOT PROGRAM. (a) Requires the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to establish a pilot program to provide recipients of medical assistance with oral and written language interpreter services in accordance with federal law and applicable publications of the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and the Office for Civil Rights of the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

(b) Requires HHSC to establish the pilot program through local governmental entities in sites determined by HHSC, one of which must be the Harris County Hospital District.

(c) Requires HHSC to ensure that the pilot program is financed using certain money.

(d) Requires HHSC, not later than January 1, 2005, to evaluate the pilot program and report to the 79th Legislature on the effectiveness of the program and the feasibility of expanding the program statewide.

(e) Provides that this section expires September 1, 2005.

SECTION 2. Requires the agency affected by the provision to request the waiver or authorization and authorizes the agency to delay implementing that provision until the waiver or authorization is granted, if before implementing any provision of the Act a state agency determines that a waiver or authorization from a federal agency is necessary for implementation of that provision.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2003.