

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
80R6073 BEF-D

S.B. 591
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Health & Human Services
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita were natural disasters that required the ability to communicate with personnel, such as physicians, who could play key roles in mitigating some of the damage created. Current law does not provide for the Texas Medical Board (board) to contact physicians in case of such an emergency.

As proposed, S.B. 591 requires physicians to provide e-mail addresses, phone numbers, and fax numbers as available to allow the board to contact its licensees in times of emergency. This bill also protects that contact information from disclosure and prohibits its use for any reason other than contacting the physician in a time of emergency.

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 Subchapter A, Chapter 156, Occupations Code, by adding Section 156.006, as follows:

Sec. 156.006. EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION. (a) Requires each person licensed to practice medicine under Chapter 155, Occupations Code, (license holder) to submit to the Texas Medical Board (board) telephone numbers, fax numbers, and e-mail addresses (contact information), if available and as appropriate, for the board to use to contact the license holder in an emergency.

(b) Requires a license holder who receives an initial registration permit to provide contact information no later than the 30th day after that permit is issued. Requires each license holder who applies to renew a registration permit to submit contact information with the renewal application.

(c) Requires a license holder to report any change in the license holder's contact information within 45 days of the change.

(d) Provides that the contact information provided by the license holder is confidential and is not subject to disclosure under Chapter 552 (Public Information), Government Code. Prohibits the board from disclosing contact information of a license holder to any person and specifies that the board is to only use the information to contact a license holder in an emergency.

SECTION 2. (a) Requires license holders to submit contact information to the board no later than December 1, 2007.

(b) Provides that the contact information provided by a license holder under this section is confidential and not subject to disclosure under Chapter 552 (Public Information), Government Code. Prohibits the board from disclosing the contact information of a license holder under this section to any person and specifies that the board is to only use the information to contact a license holder in an emergency.

(c) Provides that this section expires September 1, 2008.

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 2007.