

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 2081
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AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

In many areas of Texas, especially in the rural areas, there are no ambulance services. If an individual calls 9-1-1 with an accident or serious medical emergency, an ambulance provider may not be available. Currently, the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) cannot provide accurate information on where there are no services, or what services are available to certain areas. This lack of data also affects the funding of emergency medical services. When the availability and extent of emergency medical services is unknown, then efforts by the legislature to provide funding and services for disasters as well as to help areas fund necessary emergency services are hampered.

As proposed, S.B. 2081 requires a county to gather information on emergency medical services and to share that information will be shared through publication with the people who live in that particular county. The information is also required to be posted on the county's Internet website.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission in SECTION 1 (Section 774.005, Health and Safety Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Chapter 774, Health and Safety Code, by adding Section 774.005, as follows:

Sec. 774.005. COUNTY SELF-ASSESSMENT OF PROVISION OF EMERGENCY GROUND AMBULANCE SERVICES. (a) Requires each county to assess the emergency ground ambulance services provided in that county from all sources.

(b) Requires the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission (executive commissioner) to adopt rules governing the self-assessment required by this section. Requires that the rules, at minimum, require each county, in the county's self assessment, to address the minimum training, licensing, or certification of ambulance personnel; the staffing of ambulances in the county; the types of vehicles used as ambulances in the county; the type of advanced life support or basic life support, as defined by Section 773.003 (Definitions), that ambulance personnel provide; the local deployment plan for ground ambulance services; and other information determined by the executive commissioner as necessary for inclusion in the county's self-assessment of emergency ground ambulance services.

(c) Authorizes a county or municipality to establish reporting standards for emergency ground ambulance services that are stricter than those adopted under this section.

(d) Authorizes a county, emergency services district, or other entity to operate an emergency ground ambulance service that is operated in accordance with federal laws, the laws of this state, and other state and local rules.

(e) Requires each county, not later than March 1 of each year, to publish a report on the availability of emergency ground ambulance services within the county during the previous calendar year based on the county's self-assessment using factors adopted by the executive commissioner under Subsection (b) or by the county under Subsection (c). Requires the county to make the report available on the county's Internet website and annually publish a summary of the report, together with the address of the website containing the report, in a newspaper of general circulation in the county. Requires the county, if the county does not operate a website, to publish the report annually in a newspaper of general circulation in the county.

SECTION 2. (a) Requires the executive commissioner to adopt rules as required by Section 774.005, Health and Safety Code, as added by this Act, not later than January 1, 2010.

(b) Provides that a county is not required to publish a report, notwithstanding Section 774.005(e), Health and Safety Code, as added by this Act, as required by that section before March 1, 2011.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2009.