

SUBJECT: Requiring emergency medical technicians in medical service vehicles

COMMITTEE: Public Health — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 8 ayes — Berlanga, Hirschi, Coleman, Delisi, Glaze, Janek, Maxey,  
McDonald

0 nays

1 absent — Rodriguez

WITNESSES: For — None

Against — None

On — Susan Steeg and Gene Weatherall, Texas Department of Health

DIGEST: HB 1432 would require two emergency medical technicians to staff emergency medical service vehicles rather than two emergency care attendants.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2000.

SUPPORTERS SAY: Emergency medical technicians (EMTs) are required to receive 120 hours of emergency medical training and are better trained to handle life-threatening emergency medical situations. Texas currently requires ambulances to be staffed by emergency care attendants (ECAs) who have one-third the training of EMTs. While ECAs were once able to provide care, the national standard for emergency medical treatment is moving toward technicians who have a higher level of certified training such as EMT's and paramedics.

The Texas Department of Health (TDH) will offer additional training for ECAs to be certified as an EMT. The effective date of the legislation is more than five years away to give ECAs an opportunity to receive additional training and certification.

If the legislation were to go into effect tomorrow, TDH estimates that it would require 18,500 EMTs to staff ambulances. Texas has more than 25,000 EMTs, so with proper planning no shortage of EMTs will exist, even in rural areas.

Any additional cost to local communities for the certification of its ECAs as EMTs would be far outweighed by the benefits of the additional 80 hours of training the emergency technicians would receive.

OPPONENTS  
SAY:

No apparent opposition.

NOTES:

The companion bill, SB 997 by Patterson, was left pending after an April 12 hearing before the Senate Health and Human Services Committee.