

SUBJECT: Changing notification date for enrollment in Healthy Texas Women

COMMITTEE: Public Health — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 10 ayes — S. Thompson, Wray, Allison, Coleman, Frank, Lucio, Ortega,
Price, Sheffield, Zedler

0 nays

1 absent — Guerra

WITNESSES: For — Adriana Kohler, Texans Care for Children; (*Registered, but did not testify*): Juliana Kerker, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists-Texas District; Stacey Pogue, Center for Public Policy Priorities; Kaycee Crisp, Laura Lee Daigle, Lindsay Liggett and Tegra Swogger, Circle Up United Methodist Women; Erica Ding, Melinda Soeung, and Alyssa Thomason, Doctors for Change; Roberto Haddad, Doctors Hospital at Renaissance; Aimee Bertrand, Harris County Commissioners Court; Lindsay Lanagan, Legacy Community Health; Annalee Gulley, Mental Health America of Greater Houston; Christine Yanas, Methodist Healthcare Ministries of South Texas, Inc.; Alissa Sughrue, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Texas; Eric Kunish, National Alliance on Mental Illness Austin; Will Francis, National Association of Social Workers-Texas Chapter; Tom Banning, Texas Academy of Family Physicians; Jamie Dudensing, Texas Association of Health Plans; Jennifer Biundo, Texas Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy; Cameron Duncan, Texas Hospital Association; Michelle Romero, Texas Medical Association; Erika Ramirez, Texas Women's Healthcare Coalition; Jason Vaughn, Texas Young Republicans; Jennifer Lucy, TexProtects; Alexis Tatum, Travis County Commissioners Court; Nataly Saucedo, United Ways of Texas; and 21 individuals)

Against — None

On — (*Registered, but did not testify*): Viveca Martinez, Health and Human Services Commission; Rebecca Parma, Texas Right to Life)

BACKGROUND: Government Code sec. 32.0248, which expired September 1, 2011, established a demonstration project for women's health care services that expanded access to preventive health and family planning services for low-income women.

A similar program has been operated by the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) since 2016 as the "Healthy Texas Women program." Certain pregnant women who are eligible for Medicaid are enrolled in the program on the day after their Medicaid coverage ends, two months after the end of their pregnancy. HHSC notifies women by mail that they have been enrolled in the program.

Some suggest that due to the timing of the automatic enrollment notification, many women are unaware that they are enrolled in the Healthy Texas Women program and few take advantage of the program's services.

DIGEST: HB 1589 would define the "Healthy Texas Women program" as a program operated by the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) that is substantially similar to the demonstration project operated under Government Code sec. 32.0248, which expired September 1, 2011.

The bill would require HHSC to provide written notice to a woman who was a recipient of Medicaid during her pregnancy that:

- the woman had continuous coverage under Medicaid through the second month after her pregnancy ended;
- the woman's eligibility for enrollment in the Healthy Texas Women program would be determined about 30 days after the date the woman's pregnancy ended; and
- if the woman was determined eligible for the Healthy Texas Women program, she would be automatically enrolled and her coverage would begin the day after her Medicaid coverage ended.

The executive commissioner of HHSC would be required to consult with

the Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Task Force to determine when and how the notice of Healthy Texas Women program coverage should be provided to women. If feasible, the commission would provide the notice to a woman before the third trimester of her pregnancy.

If a state agency determined that a waiver or authorization from a federal agency was necessary for implementation of any provision of the bill, the state agency would be required to request the waiver and could delay implementation of the waiver or authorization until granted.

HHSC would adopt rules required to implement the bill by January 1, 2020.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2019.