

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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H.B. 1784
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Veteran Affairs & Military Installations
5/14/2011
Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Close to a decade ago, the State of Washington began using a United States Department of Health and Human Services national database called the Public Assistance Reporting Information System (PARIS) for a pilot program aimed at locating veterans who were on the state's Medicaid system, but were unknowingly eligible for benefits through the Department of Veterans Affairs or Department of Defense. If the federal benefits were of better quality than the ones provided by the state, the veteran could relinquish the Medicaid benefits and enroll in the federal system. The pilot program eventually grew into a statewide program that reportedly saved the state's Medicaid program approximately \$18 million in just seven years by enrolling roughly 5,600 veterans and their families in federal benefit programs.

The Legislative Budget Board recently recommended the use of the PARIS system as a way to save state funds by identifying veterans who are in the state Medicaid system but are also entitled to federal benefits. H.B. 1784 seeks to implement this recommendation by authorizing a memorandum of understanding among certain state agencies for the purposes of coordinating and collecting data from PARIS to identify new strategies for state agencies to use that data in ways that generate fiscal savings for the state and maximize the availability of and access to benefits for veterans.

H.B. 1784 amends current law relating to requiring an interagency memorandum of understanding regarding the Public Assistance Reporting Information System and to the use of data from that system.

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 B, Chapter 531, Government Code by adding Section 531.0998, as follows:

Sec. 531.0998. MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING REGARDING PUBLIC ASSISTANCE REPORTING INFORMATION SYSTEM; MAXIMIZATION OF BENEFITS. (a) Defines in this section, "system."

(b) Requires the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC), the Veterans' Land Board (VLB), and the Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS) to enter into a memorandum of understanding for the purposes of coordinating and collecting information about the use and analysis among state agencies of data received from the public assistance reporting information system (PARIS), and developing new strategies for state agencies to use PARIS data in ways that generate fiscal savings for the state, and maximize the availability of and access to benefits for veterans.

(c) Requires HHSC, TVC, and DADS to coordinate to assist veterans in maximizing the benefits available to each veteran by using PARIS.

(d) Authorizes HHSC and the TVC together to determine the geographic scope of the efforts described by Subsection (c).

(e) Requires HHSC, TVC, VLB, and DADS collectively, not later than October 1, 2012, to submit to the governor and the Legislative Budget Board a report describing:

(1) the frequency and success with which state agencies have used PARIS;

(2) the costs to the state that were avoided as a result of state agencies' use of PARIS; and

(3) recommendations for future use of the system by state agencies.

(f) Provides that Subsection (e) and this subsection expire September 1, 2013.

SECTION 2. Requires the HHSC, TVC, VLB, and DADS, not later than December 1, 2011, to enter into a memorandum of understanding as required by Section 531.0998, Government Code, as added by this Act.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2011.