

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 1718
By: Campbell
Health & Human Services
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Currently, Texas law allows ophthalmologists and optometrists to co-manage glaucoma patients. If an optometrist diagnoses a patient with glaucoma, an ophthalmologist of the patient's choice, or one in the area where the patient resides, must confirm the diagnosis within 30 days. After that, the two providers are to manage the glaucoma patient collaboratively. A face-to-face visit with the patient is required only at the ophthalmologist's discretion. Although the ophthalmologist is ultimately responsible for the glaucoma patient's care, the patient may not know who the supervising ophthalmologist is, especially in cases without the face-to-face visit.

A searchable, web-based registry is needed. It is very important for patients to know who is ultimately responsible for their treatment. The registry will provide that information. Every glaucoma patient being treated by an optometrist will be able to easily find the name and contact information of the ophthalmologist who is collaborating in the management of his or her glaucoma care.

As proposed, S.B. 1718 amends current law relating to the creation and maintenance of a registry of physicians co-managing patients with licensees under Chapter 351, Occupations Code.

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 153, Occupations Code, as follows:

Sec. 153.017. COMANAGEMENT REGISTRY. (a) Requires the Texas Medical Board (TMB) to:

(1) maintain a registry of physicians engaged in the comanagement of patients under the provisions of Section 351.3581 (Diagnosis and Treatment of Glaucoma), Occupations Code.

(2) make the registry available to the public through TMB's Internet website, and:

a. make the registry searchable by physician name, and county in which the physician lists the primary practice location;

b. make searchable by licensee under Chapter 351 (Optometrists and Therapeutic Optometrists), Occupations Code.

(b) Requires a physician engaged in comanagement of patients under this section to provide the names and primary practice address of the licensees under Chapter 351 with whom the physician is comanaging patients.

(c) Authorizes a licensed physician engaged in comanagement under Section 351.3581, Occupations Code, to update this information through the internet portal of TMB through which other information is updated at any time, but requires a licensed physician to do so at least annually.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2015.