

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 861
By: McReynolds
Public Health
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Emergency Care Attendants (ECA) in the state of Texas are the first level of emergency medical care. They are only allowed to deliver non-invasive emergency medical services such as reading blood pressure, checking pulse rates, dispersing oxygen, applying pressure bandages, repositioning victims, and transporting victims to medical care facilities. Under current law, an individual may become an Emergency Care Attendant by receiving certification through the Texas Department of Health. In order to get this certificate, TDH requires a person to be at least 18 years of age, successfully complete approved courses, pass a written test, and pay all applicable fees. TDH also requires that an ECA should have either a GED or a high school diploma. Currently, TDH has the authority to provide a waiver on the above-mentioned department requirements. However, many in the community are not aware of this waiver process and it prevents the delivery of health care services. H.B. 861 allows individuals who serve as volunteers to be exempt from the high school diploma or degree requirement.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Board of Health in SECTION 1 (Section 773.046, Health and Safety Code) of this bill.

ANALYSIS

Amends Section 773.046 of the Health and Safety Code by removing the high school diploma or equivalent requirement for becoming an ECA volunteer during the certification period. It requires the Texas Board of Health to adopt rules necessary to administer this section.

The Texas Board of Health is required to adopt the rules necessary no later than January 1, 2004.

The Act applies only to an individual who files an application for certification as an emergency care attendant volunteer on or after January 1, 2004.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2003.