

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 1347

By: Uresti

State Health Care Expenditures, Select
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Throughout Texas, thousands of people are on waiting lists for mental health and mental retardation services. According to the Task Force on Equity of Resource Allocation, the combination of a large number of uninsured, an expanding population, and a growing awareness of needs has resulted in a growing demand for mental health and mental retardation services across the country, particularly in Texas. The Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation (TDMHMR) is now serving less than one-third of the estimated priority population for these services. Some indicate that these waiting lists underestimate the true need for services, and the need will only continue to grow.

Further compounding the shortage of services in Texas is the unequal distribution of state funds allocated to local authorities to provide mental health services. The estimated current per-capita expenditure for Mental Health Authorities (MHAs) ranges from \$9.74 in Denton County, to \$30.00 at Lakes Regional Mental Health and Mental Retardation Center. The fair and equitable distribution of funds is critical given the fact that Texas ranks forty-seventh in the nation in per-capita spending for mental health services.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

House Bill 1347 amends the Health and Safety Code by requiring the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation (TDMHMR) to develop and implement a plan that achieves equity in the distribution and funding of mental health services among communities in this state no later than September 1, 2009. The bill requires the plan to address local and statewide changes in population and in the need for TDMHMR services. The bill provides that the provisions set forth within the bill expire on September 1, 2009.

EFFECTIVE DATE

This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members of each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If the Act does not receive the necessary vote for immediate effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2003.