

By: Lindsay

S.B. No. 1202

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to directing the Health and Human Services Commission to study and report on the use and effectiveness of nurse triage lines.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. DEFINITIONS. In this Act:

(1) "Commission" means the Health and Human Services Commission.

(2) "Nurse triage line" means a telephone hot line that persons may call to obtain advice from a nurse or other health care professional regarding whether a person should promptly seek medical care.

SECTION 2. STUDY. The commission shall study the use and effectiveness of nurse triage lines. In conducting the study, the commission shall:

(1) identify and communicate with health care plans and health care providers that offer clients access to a nurse triage line;

(2) review the current operation of nurse triage lines by private and public sector health care plans and health care providers in this state and other states;

(3) determine the extent to which multiple nurse triage lines available in the same geographic area are currently coordinated and consider how best to coordinate the activities of multiple nurse triage lines in the same geographic area;

1 (4) study how the availability of nurse triage lines
2 is currently advertised and consider how to improve the marketing
3 of the service;

4 (5) identify areas of the state that do not have access
5 to a nurse triage line;

6 (6) identify the types of individuals who currently
7 have and who currently do not have access to a nurse triage line,
8 including Medicaid fee-for-service clients, Medicaid managed care
9 clients, Medicaid primary care case management clients, persons
10 enrolled in the state child health plan, and persons who obtain
11 health care from any public health entity;

12 (7) identify any liability issues that affect giving
13 advice through a nurse triage line; and

14 (8) study how nurse triage lines have impacted the use
15 of emergency and trauma rooms in this state.

16 SECTION 3. STATEWIDE STRATEGIC PLAN. The commission shall
17 develop a statewide strategic plan on how to maximize the
18 effectiveness and operation of nurse triage lines in this state.
19 The plan must:

20 (1) include strategies that the state should employ to
21 improve access to and coordination of existing nurse triage lines;

22 (2) address the cost of each element of the strategic
23 plan and possible sources of funding for implementing the plan;

24 (3) recommend any necessary legislation;

25 (4) include strategies for improving state support of
26 health care plans and providers that currently offer nurse triage
27 lines and improving coordination of existing nurse triage lines;

1 and

2 (5) recommend measures to increase access to nurse
3 triage lines by underserved areas and underserved populations.

4 SECTION 4. REPORT. (a) The commission shall publish the
5 results and findings of its study together with the statewide
6 strategic plan developed as a result of the study in a report that
7 the commission shall issue to the governor, the presiding officer
8 of each house of the legislature, and the members of each standing
9 committee of either house of the legislature that has jurisdiction
10 over the commission.

11 (b) The commission shall issue the report not later than
12 November 1, 2004.

13 SECTION 5. EXPIRATION. This Act expires June 1, 2005.

14 SECTION 6. EFFECTIVE DATE. This Act takes effect
15 immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members
16 elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas
17 Constitution. If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for
18 immediate effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2003.