

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

S.B. 46  
By: Nelson  
Human Services  
Committee Report (Unamended)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

Currently, there are several health and human services (HHS) benefit programs, each with its own identification and validation mechanism. The State recently recognized similar duplication among its eligibility programs and undertook a significant project to consolidate eligibility.

S.B. 46 encourages the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to consider combining the benefit delivery mechanism for multiple HHS benefit programs to gain cost-efficiencies. S.B. 46 allows HHSC to develop and implement new methods, including an integrated benefits card or cards, to consolidate identification and benefits issuance for multiple HHS services if HHSC determines such a consolidation to be feasible and cost effective.

### **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**

The bill authorizes the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to develop and implement a method to consolidate, to the extent possible, recipient identification and benefits issuance for HHSC and health and human services agencies if HHSC determines that the implementation would be feasible and cost-effective.

The bill describes permissible characteristics of the method to consolidate recipient information and benefits issuance, and describes required steps to be taken by HHSC in developing and implementing the method.

The bill requires HHSC, not later than January 1, 2006, to assess the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of using a single integrated benefits issuance card, multiple cards, or another method, for consolidating recipient identification and benefits issuance for certain health and human services programs as described in the bill.

The bill authorizes HHSC to consider information obtained from certain programs in conducting the assessment, and to require any health and human services agency and the Department of Information Resources to assist HHSC in performing its duties relating to the assessment.

The bill requires HHSC, not later than July 1, 2006, to report the findings of the assessment to the clerks of the standing committees of the Senate and House of Representatives having jurisdiction over health and human services issues.

The bill authorizes delay of implementation of any provision of this Act until any necessary federal waiver or authorization is obtained.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

Upon passage or, if the Act does not receive the necessary vote, the Act takes effect September 1, 2005.