

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 691
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Public Health
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Arthritis is the nation's leading cause of disability among individuals over the age of 18. Texas' share of the costs associated with the disability are significant. Without a coordinated public health effort, the significant societal and individual costs inflicted by arthritis will also increase. Arthritis prevention and control legislation will assure that the ongoing needs of the 3.7 million Texans who suffer the debilitating affects of arthritis will be addressed.

S.B. 691 requires the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) to develop and implement an arthritis control and prevention program. DSHS must conduct a needs assessment on arthritis, raise public awareness on arthritis, and establish an arthritis advisory committee. DSHS is currently performing these functions with grant money from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and this bill ensures the continuation of those functions.

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

S.B. 691 defines "arthritis" and "program" and requires the Texas Department of Health (department) to develop and implement an arthritis control and prevention program (program) to accomplish heighten awareness and enhance knowledge and understanding of arthritis among consumers, health professionals, teachers, and human services providers and work to increase and improve community-based services available to persons with arthritis and their families to the extent that money has been appropriated or is otherwise available.

S.B. 691 requires the department, as a part of the program, to work with public and private organizations to assess the current status of arthritis, considering mortality and morbidity, public and professional awareness, and educational needs for and support services available to people with arthritis.

S.B. 691 requires the department, through the program, to work with public and private organizations to raise the public awareness of the causes, nature, personal risk factors, value of prevention and early detection, ways to minimize preventable pain, and options for diagnosing and treating arthritis. The department may use strategies, including strategies consistent with the National Arthritis Action Plan and other state arthritis planning efforts to heighten public awareness.

S.B. 691 authorizes the department to identify, replicate, and use successful evidence-based arthritis programs and obtain relevant materials and services from organizations with appropriate expertise and knowledge of arthritis.

S.B. 691 authorizes the department to enter into contracts or agreements as necessary to carry out this chapter. Authorizes the contracts or agreements to provide for payment by the state for materials, equipment, and services. Authorizes the department to seek, receive, and spend any money received through appropriations, grants, donations, or contributions from public or private sources to develop and implement the program and requires the department to provide and train staff to implement the program.

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S.B. 691 requires the department to establish and coordinate the Arthritis Advisory Committee (committee), provides that the committee consists of members appointed by the commissioner, to include: persons with arthritis, public health educators, medical experts, providers of arthritis health care, representatives of national arthritis organizations and their local chapters, and provides that the committee will advise the department on developing and implementing the program. The members of the committee receive no additional compensation for serving on the committee and may not be reimbursed for travel or other expenses incurred while conducting the business of the committee and provides that the committee is not subject to Chapter 2110 (State Agency Advisory Committees), Government Code.

The statutory reference in this bill is to the Texas Department of Health, the bill affects the Department of State Health Services, as the successor agency to the Texas Department of Health.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2005.