

By: Villarreal

H.B. No. 691

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to a Medicaid health literacy pilot program.

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

SECTION 1. Subchapter B, Chapter 531, Government Code, is amended by adding Section 531.02131 to read as follows:

Sec. 531.02131. MEDICAID HEALTH LITERACY PILOT PROGRAM.

(a) In order to prevent unnecessary emergency room visits and health costs for Medicaid recipients, the commission shall develop and implement a Medicaid health literacy pilot program in Bexar County under which Medicaid recipients with young children receive health information materials and training designed to improve their health care decision-making.

(b) The commission shall request proposals from health maintenance organizations serving Medicaid recipients in Bexar County for operation of the health literacy pilot program.

(c) The pilot program must:

(1) establish a statistically significant test group and control group of Medicaid recipients with young children served by the health maintenance organization;

(2) provide the test group with health information materials in English and Spanish that:

(A) are developed with consideration of the literacy level of the test group; and

(B) provide the test group with information to

1 guide their health care decisions, including information about
2 common health problems, prevention, home treatment, and
3 circumstances in which it is appropriate to contact a health care
4 professional;

5 (3) provide training to the test group on how to use
6 the health information materials;

7 (4) provide follow-up reminders to the test group
8 regarding use of the health information materials approximately six
9 months after the date the materials are initially provided;

10 (5) track the health care costs, utilization of
11 services, and emergency room visits for the test group and the
12 control group for a period of one year; and

13 (6) provide for reports to the commission on the
14 status of the pilot program:

15 (A) after the program has been operating for six
16 months; and

17 (B) after the program has been operating for one
18 year.

19 (d) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section,
20 the commission is not required to develop and implement the pilot
21 program if a suitable contractor is not available to operate the
22 pilot program.

23 (e) The executive commissioner shall adopt rules necessary
24 for implementation of this section.

25 (f) This section expires September 1, 2007.

26 SECTION 2. (a) Not later than October 1, 2005, the Health
27 and Human Services Commission shall request proposals for operation

1 of the Medicaid health literacy pilot program.

2 (b) Not later than November 1, 2005, the Health and Human
3 Services Commission shall select a health maintenance organization
4 to operate the pilot program.

5 (c) Not later than January 1, 2006, the health maintenance
6 organization selected by the Health and Human Services Commission
7 shall distribute the health literacy materials and begin the pilot
8 program.

9 (d) Not later than August 1, 2006, the Health and Human
10 Services Commission, with the assistance of the health maintenance
11 organization operating the pilot program, shall report to the
12 governor, the lieutenant governor, and the speaker of the house of
13 representatives regarding the preliminary results of the pilot
14 program. The report must include:

15 (1) a description of the status of the program;

16 (2) an evaluation of the effects of the program on
17 emergency room visits by program participants; and

18 (3) a report summarizing the health care costs,
19 utilization of services, and emergency room visits for the test
20 group and control group established under the program.

21 (e) Not later than January 1, 2007, the Health and Human
22 Services Commission, with the assistance of the health maintenance
23 organization operating the pilot program, shall report the final
24 results of the pilot program to the governor, the lieutenant
25 governor, and the speaker of the house of representatives and make a
26 recommendation for revising or expanding the program.

27 SECTION 3. If before implementing any provision of this Act

1 a state agency determines that a waiver or authorization from a
2 federal agency is necessary for implementation of that provision,
3 the agency affected by the provision shall request the waiver or
4 authorization and may delay implementing that provision until the
5 waiver or authorization is granted.

6 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect September 1, 2005.