

AN ACT

relating to allowing the Texas Medical Disclosure Panel to hold hearings by telecommunication methods.

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

SECTION 1. Section 74.102(f), Civil Practice and Remedies Code, is amended to read as follows:

(f) Meetings of the panel shall be held at the call of the chairman or on petition of at least three members of the panel. Notwithstanding Chapter 551, Government Code, or any other law, if any member of the panel is physically present at a meeting, any number of the other members of the panel may attend the meeting by use of telephone conference call, videoconferencing, or other similar telecommunication method for purposes of establishing a quorum or voting or for any other meeting purpose allowing a panel member to fully participate in any panel meeting. This subsection applies without regard to the subject matter discussed or considered by the panel at the meeting. A meeting held by telephone conference call, videoconferencing, or other similar telecommunication method:

(1) is subject to the notice requirements applicable to other meetings of the panel;

(2) may not be held unless the notice of the meeting specifies the location of the meeting at which a member of the panel will be physically present;

1 (3) must be open to the public and audible to the
2 public at the location specified in the notice under Subdivision
3 (2); and

4 (4) must provide two-way audio communication between
5 all panel members attending the meeting during the entire meeting,
6 and, if the two-way audio communication link with any member
7 attending the meeting is disrupted at any time, the meeting may not
8 continue until the two-way audio communication link is
9 reestablished.

10 SECTION 2. The change in law made by this Act applies only
11 to a meeting of the Texas Medical Disclosure Panel that occurs on or
12 after the effective date of this Act. A meeting of the panel that
13 occurs before the effective date of this Act is governed by the law
14 in effect immediately before that date, and that law is continued in
15 effect for that purpose.

16 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
17 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
18 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
19 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
20 Act takes effect September 1, 2005.

President of the Senate

Speaker of the House

I certify that H.B. No. 2476 was passed by the House on May 9, 2005, by the following vote: Yeas 144, Nays 0, 3 present, not voting.

Chief Clerk of the House

I certify that H.B. No. 2476 was passed by the Senate on May 25, 2005, by the following vote: Yeas 31, Nays 0.

Secretary of the Senate

APPROVED: _____

Date

Governor