

By: Nelson

S.B. No. 46

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

1
2 relating to a universal benefits issuance and identification card
3 for health and human services programs.

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

5 SECTION 1. Subchapter B, Chapter 531, Government Code, is
6 amended by adding Section 531.080 to read as follows:

7 Sec. 531.080. UNIVERSAL SERVICES CARD. (a) The commission
8 may develop and implement a universal services card or other method
9 to consolidate recipient identification and benefits issuance for
10 the commission and health and human services agencies if the
11 commission determines that the implementation would be feasible and
12 cost-effective.

13 (b) The universal services card or other method may:

14 (1) incorporate a biometric identifier to enable
15 personal identity verification at a point of service and reduce
16 fraud;

17 (2) enable immediate electronic verification of
18 recipient eligibility; and

19 (3) replace multiple forms, cards, or other methods
20 used for fraud reduction or provision of health and human services
21 benefits, including:

22 (A) electronic benefits transfer cards; and

23 (B) smart cards used in the Medicaid program.

24 SECTION 2. (a) Not later than January 1, 2006, the Health

1 and Human Services Commission shall assess the feasibility and
2 cost-effectiveness of using a universal services card or other
3 method for consolidating recipient identification and benefits
4 issuance for various health and human services programs, including:

5 (1) the financial assistance program under Chapter 31,
6 Human Resources Code;

7 (2) the medical assistance program under Chapter 32,
8 Human Resources Code;

9 (3) the nutritional assistance programs under Chapter
10 33, Human Resources Code; and

11 (4) the special supplemental nutrition program for
12 women, infants, and children authorized by 42 U.S.C. Section 1786.

13 (b) In conducting the assessment, the commission may
14 consider information obtained from:

15 (1) the Medicaid fraud reduction pilot program
16 required by Section 531.1063, Government Code;

17 (2) the Texas Integrated Enrollment Services
18 eligibility determination system; and

19 (3) the state's electronic benefits transfer system.

20 (c) The commission may require any health and human services
21 agency and the Department of Information Resources to assist the
22 commission in performing its duties under this section.

23 SECTION 3. Not later than July 1, 2006, the Health and Human
24 Services Commission shall report the findings of the assessment
25 required by Section 2 of this Act to the clerks of the standing
26 committees of the senate and house of representatives having
27 jurisdiction over health and human services issues.

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

7 SECTION 5. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
8 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
9 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
10 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
11 Act takes effect September 1, 2005.