

By: Madla, et al.

S.B. No. 376

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to a pilot program for language interpreter services under the medical assistance program.

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

SECTION 1. Subchapter B, Chapter 32, Human Resources Code, is amended by adding Section 32.068 to read as follows:

Sec. 32.068. LANGUAGE INTERPRETER SERVICES PILOT PROGRAM.

(a) The Health and Human Services Commission shall establish a pilot program to provide recipients of medical assistance with oral and written language interpreter services in accordance with federal law and applicable publications of the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and the Office for Civil Rights of the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

(b) The commission shall establish the pilot program through local governmental entities in at least five sites. The commission shall request participation by, and give first priority to, the following local governmental entities:

(1) the Harris County Hospital District;

(2) the Bexar County Hospital District;

(3) the El Paso County Hospital District;

(4) the Tarrant County Hospital District; and

(5) the Parkland Health and Hospital System.

(c) If one or more local governmental entities listed under Subsection (b) decline to participate in the pilot program, the

1 commission shall request participation by other local governmental
2 entities until the commission obtains agreements to participate
3 from a sufficient number of local governmental entities to enable
4 the commission to establish the program in at least five sites.

5 (d) The commission shall ensure that the pilot program is
6 financed using:

7 (1) money provided to the commission for purposes of
8 the program by participating local governmental entities to
9 maximize federal matching money under the medical assistance
10 program; and

11 (2) any corresponding federal matching money.

12 (e) A participating local governmental entity may provide
13 money to the commission by certification or intergovernmental
14 transfer to finance the pilot program as described by Subsection
15 (d)(1).

16 (f) Not later than January 1, 2007, the commission shall
17 evaluate the pilot program and report to the 80th Legislature on the
18 effectiveness of the program and the feasibility of expanding the
19 program statewide.

20 (g) This section expires September 1, 2007.

21 SECTION 2. If before implementing any provision of this Act
22 a state agency determines that a waiver or authorization from a
23 federal agency is necessary for implementation of that provision,
24 the agency affected by the provision shall request the waiver or
25 authorization and may delay implementing that provision until the
26 waiver or authorization is granted.

27 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives

1 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
2 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
3 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
4 Act takes effect September 1, 2005.