

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

H.B. 321  
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Human Services  
Committee Report (Unamended)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

Currently, local and regional indigent care networks assess new clients to determine the local, state or federal programs they are eligible for. If the client is determined to be eligible for certain state and federal programs that are administered through the Health and Human Services Commission (commission) the client must provide to the state much of the same information and documentation that was just reviewed by the care network in order to complete enrollment in the Health and Human Services Commission administered programs. This duplicates the effort for the client and the local care giver. The commission currently has no way to electronically accept supporting eligibility documentation from local care networks and must rely on time-consuming methods such as matching paper documents with applications and scanning faxed documents.

H.B. 321 would simplify the eligibility determination and enrollment processes by allowing the commission to electronically import state eligibility information collected by local care networks. The bill requires the commission to establish a pilot project to determine the feasibility, costs and benefits of accepting an electronic system. The bill provides that the area selected for the pilot project to have a functioning indigent care collaborative system with a network of providers that assesses eligibility for the health and human services programs using electronic systems. The participating pilot network must have data systems compatible with the eligibility system at the commission.

### **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**

H.B. 321 requires the Health and Human Services Commission (commission) to establish a pilot project in at least one urban area of this state to determine the feasibility, costs, and benefits of accepting, for the purpose of establishing eligibility for benefits under state and federal health and human services programs administered by the commission, the direct importation of electronic eligibility information from an electronic system operated by a regional indigent care collaborative system.

The bill provides that an area selected for the pilot project have a functioning indigent care collaborative system that includes a network of providers and assesses eligibility for health and human services programs using electronic systems. The bill provides that electronic systems used by the collaborative system be able to interface with electronic systems managed by the commission to enable the commission to import application and eligibility information regarding applicants for health and human services programs. The bill requires the commission to: (1) authorize a project in which electronic applications for indigent care created by a regional indigent care network be shared with the commission to facilitate enrollment in health and human services programs administered by the commission; (2) solicit and obtain support for the project from local officials and indigent care providers; (3) ensure that all identifying and descriptive information of recipients in each health and human services program included in the project can only be accessed by providers or other entities participating in the project; and (4) ensure that the storage and communication of all identifying and descriptive information included in the project complies with existing federal and state privacy laws governing individually identifiable information for recipients of public benefits programs.

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The bill requires the Health and Human Services Commission take action to begin implementation of the pilot project not later than the 180th day after the effective date of this act. By December 1, 2008, the Health and Human Services Commission is required to assess the cost-effectiveness, efficacy, efficiency, and benefits of the program and report their findings to the standing committees of the Senate and House of Representatives that have primary jurisdiction over health and human services issues. The bill requires that if before implementing any provision of this act, a state agency determines that a waiver or authorization from a federal agency is necessary for implementation of that provision, the state agency requests the waiver or authorization and is authorized to delay implementing that provision until the waiver or authorization is granted.

**EFFECTIVE DATE**

Upon passage, or, if the Act does not receive the necessary vote, the Act takes effect September 1, 2007.