

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 2361
By: Coleman
Public Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The Department of State Health Services (DSHS) has provided grant funds to school-based health centers (SBHCs) since 1999. The Commissioner of State Health Services is required to award grants to assist school districts with the costs of operating SBHCs. The 79th Legislature established the amount of funds available for the grant program and required DSHS to award at least two new contracts each year of the biennium.

However, during the past few grant cycles, very few schools have applied for the start-up grant funding. Based on stakeholder input, the problem is the grant-writing process, which is a difficult process for schools to undertake. Current law restricts application for this grant funding to school districts. Most schools do not have the resident expertise to write grants and may also lack experience in primary health care. Program stakeholders indicate that a joint application process, in which school districts can collaborate with local health departments, hospitals, federally qualified health centers or other qualified providers, could significantly increase the pool of qualified grant applicants.

In addition, current law requires DSHS to issue an annual report to the Legislature regarding the efficacy of school-based health centers, based on statistics obtained from every SBHC in the state. However, these statistics are not available because no reporting requirement for the clinics exists. In lieu of the statewide report, DSHS has submitted reports detailing the efforts of grant recipients only. This bill reconciles the law to the current practice.

This bill allows non-profit organizations and/or governmental entities to collaborate with school districts in applying for grant funding from the state. The bill also limits the scope of the agency's annual report on SBHCs to the progress and accomplishments of SBHCs receiving grant funding from the state.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority previously granted to the Commissioner of State Health Services is modified in SECTION 1 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

Note: Unless otherwise specified, statutory references in this BILL ANALYSIS are to the Education Code.

This bill provides that, subject to the availability of federal or state appropriated funds, the commissioner of state health services shall administer a program under which grants are awarded to assist school districts and nonprofit organizations or governmental entities that collaborate with school districts with the costs of school-based health centers in accordance with this section. The commissioner of state health services (commissioner) by rule shall establish procedures for awarding grants. The rules must provide that: grants are awarded annually through a competitive process to: school districts; and nonprofit organizations or governmental entities that collaborate with school districts to establish and operate school-based health centers; and a preference is given to school-based health centers in school districts that are located in rural areas or that have low property wealth per student.

The bill provides that a school district, nonprofit organization, or governmental entity may not receive more than \$250,000 per state fiscal biennium through such grants. To be eligible to receive a grant, a school district, nonprofit organization, or governmental entity must provide matching funds in accordance with rules adopted by the commissioner. The matching funds may be obtained from any source available to the district, nonprofit organization, or governmental entity, including in-kind contributions, community or foundation grants, individual contributions, and local governmental agency operating funds.

The bill provides that the commissioner shall adopt rules establishing standards for health care centers funded through grants that place primary emphasis on delivery of health services and secondary emphasis on population-based models that prevent emerging health threats.

The bill provides that the commissioner of state health services shall require client surveys to be conducted in school-based health centers funded through such grants, and the results of those surveys must be included in the annual report required under Section 38.064.

The bill provides that, based on statistics obtained from each school-based health center that receives a grant under Section 38.063, the commissioner shall issue an annual report to the legislature about the relative efficacy of services delivered by school-based health centers that receive state grants and any increased academic success of students at campuses served by those centers, with special emphasis on any: increased attendance; improved student health; and improved performance on student assessment instruments administered under Subchapter B, Chapter 39. In obtaining statistics for preparation of the report, the commissioner shall ensure that data is collected and aggregated appropriately according to geographical region.

EFFECTIVE DATE

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