

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 3575
By: Rose
Human Services
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

On March 1st, 2007, the House Human Services Committee appointed a Subcommittee on Integrated Eligibility & Texas Integrated Eligibility Redesign System (TIERS). The Subcommittee was charged with examining the effectiveness of the Integrated Eligibility and Enrollment System (IEES) pilot launched in January 2006 under a privatization contract that is now being cancelled by the Health and Human Services Commission (commission). To date, more than half a billion taxpayer dollars have been spent on TIERS/IEES.

As proposed, CSHB 3575 requires the commission to develop a transition plan to transform and enhance the eligibility system used to deliver the benefits of the TIERS and the System of Application, Verification, Eligibility, Referral and Reporting (SAVERR). CSHB 3575 also creates the Health and Human Services Eligibility System Oversight Committee to support the commission's implementation of the enhanced eligibility system in a manner that maximizes the positive effects of that implementation on the delivery of health and human services.

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

The bill establishes the monitoring and enhancement of health and human services information technology systems. The bill defines "committee," "eligibility system," "enhanced eligibility system," and "quality assurance team."

The bill provides that the enhanced eligibility system implemented under this subchapter must be designed to achieve certain goals with respect to certain health and human services benefit programs in this state and sets out those goals.

The bill requires the Health and Human Services Commission (commission) to develop a transition plan not later than January 1, 2009 to transform and enhance the existing eligibility system to be more fully functional in serving the needs of eligible Texas residents. The bill further requires the commission to include a timetable for meeting specific goals with respect to achieving that transformation.

The bill provides that the transition plan must include a description of the commission's responsibilities with respect to and role in making the transition, specify the responsibilities and roles of persons with whom the commission contracted before and after September 1, 2007 in making that transition and implementing the enhanced eligibility system, and specify the steps the commission will take to achieve the set goals of the enhanced eligibility system. The bill requires the commission to make the transition plan available to the public at a public hearing conducted by the health and human services eligibility system legislative oversight committee (committee) not later than September 15, 2007.

The bill requires the commission's office of inspector general to establish, in consultation with the Department of Information Resources, an independent validation and verification program for the eligibility system during the period of the transition plan. The bill provides that the program must allow for a determination of whether the goals set by the commission in the transition plan are being met in accordance with the established timetable, whether the eligibility

system is progressing toward becoming fully functional in serving the needs of eligible Texas residents, what actions are necessary to achieve full functionality of the eligibility system, whether the commission is making progress toward meeting the goals of the enhanced eligibility system and what additional actions are necessary to achieve the goals of the enhanced eligibility system.

The bill requires the office of inspector general to present the proposed independent validation and verification program to the committee and seek the committee's recommendations for modifications to the proposed program. The bill further requires the office of inspector general to consider the committee's recommendations and modify the proposed program as necessary.

The bill authorizes the commission's office of inspector general to enter into a contract with a person to perform the duties required of the office. The bill requires the quality assurance team to establish a schedule for periodic monitoring of the eligibility system during the period of the transition plan. The bill requires the commission's office of inspector general and the quality assurance team to share information as necessary to fulfill their respective duties.

The bill requires the commission to identify the enhanced eligibility system as major information resources project, as defined by Section 2054.003 (10), Government Code, in the commission's biennial operating plan.

The bill sets forth that the committee is created to support the commission's implementation of the enhanced eligibility system in a manner that maximizes the positive effects of that implementation on the delivery of health and human services and sets forth the composition of that committee.

The bill establishes that the executive commissioner serves as an ex officio member of the committee.

The bill establishes that a member of the committee serves at the will of the appointing official.

The bill requires the lieutenant governor and the speaker of the house of representatives to each designate another committee member to serve as a joint presiding officer.

The bill establishes that the committee meets at the call of a joint presiding officer.

The bill prohibits a committee member from receiving compensation for serving on the committee and entitles a committee member to be reimbursed for expenses incurred while conducting business of the committee.

The bill requires the committee to conduct a hearing at least once every four months; review information with respect to the transition plan and the progress made in implementing that plan; review recommendations made by the commission, including the commission's office of inspector general, and the quality assurance team, regarding actions necessary to improve functionality of the eligibility system; make recommendations to the legislature not later than December 1, 2008 regarding any legislative action necessary to support the implementation of the enhanced eligibility system; and monitor and regularly report to the legislature the effectiveness and efficiency of the enhanced eligibility system after it is implemented.

The bill provides that the subchapter established by this Act expires September 1, 2011.

The bill requires the governor, the lieutenant governor and the speaker of the house to appoint members of the health and human services eligibility system legislative oversight committee not later than September 1, 2007.

The bill requires the health and human services eligibility system legislative oversight committee to conduct the first public hearing no later than September 15, 2007.

EFFECTIVE DATE

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

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL TO SUBSTITUTE

The substitute differs from the original in that the relating clause states that the bill is relating to the monitoring and enhancement of health and human services information technology systems. The substitute establishes the monitoring and enhancement of health and human services information technology systems whereas the original established an audit of the existing health and human services information technology systems. The substitute requires the Health and Human Services Commission (commission) to develop a transition plan to transform and enhance the eligibility system used to deliver the benefits of the Texas Integrated Eligibility Redesign System (TIERS) and the System of Application, Verification, Eligibility, Referral and Reporting (SAVERR) to be more fully functional in serving the needs of the users whereas the original required the executive commissioner to enter into a contract for another person to audit the TIERS and SAVERR systems. The substitute adds language establishing an eligibility system review during the transition period. The substitute requires the commission to identify the enhanced eligibility system as major information resources project, as defined by Section 2054.003 (10), Government Code, in the commission's biennial operating plan. The substitute creates the health and human services eligibility system legislative oversight committee and establishes its duties whereas the original required the commission to submit a final report on the results of the audit to the presiding officer of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee, the presiding officer of the House Human Services Committee, the governor and the executive commissioner and outlines what the report must include. The substitute removes provisions requiring the commissioner to include the commission's recommendations regarding whether new health and human services benefit program cases should be converted to TIERS. The substitute requires the health and human services eligibility system legislative oversight committee to conduct the first public hearing no later than September 15, 2007. The substitute expires September 1, 2011 whereas the original expired January 1, 2009.