

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 811
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Public Health
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The federal Vaccines for Children Program (program) was developed to support efforts to increase childhood immunization levels by providing publicly purchased vaccines, including influenza vaccines, to eligible children. A large number of Texas children qualify for influenza vaccines through the program. The majority of the vaccines provided through the program are administered in the offices of private physicians who are program providers. The physicians receive the vaccines at no cost in exchange for abiding by federal laws concerning the use of the influenza vaccine. The Department of State Health Services (DSHS) selects which brand of influenza vaccine on the federal list will be provided and used in the program. Currently, DSHS uses only the least expensive available influenza vaccine without considering the administration method or efficacy of the vaccine. Thus, physicians are limited in the brand of influenza vaccine provided by DSHS. If physicians were allowed to select the brand of influenza vaccine to use they could exercise their professional judgment in selecting the appropriate influenza vaccine for patients and would have greater flexibility in the face of flu vaccine shortages or supply issues. In addition, by allowing physicians to use both the trivalent influenza virus and live attenuated influenza vaccines, the number of physicians participating in the program would increase.

As proposed, S.B. 811 requires DSHS to allow physicians in the program to select any influenza vaccine from the federal list.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to any state officer, institution, or agency.

ANALYSIS

[While the statutory reference in this bill is to the Texas Department of Health (TDH), the following amendments affect the Department of State Health Services (DSHS), as the successor agency to TDH.]

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter A, Chapter 161, Health and Safety Code, by adding Section 161.0102, as follows:

Sec. 161.0102. VACCINES FOR CHILDREN PROGRAM. (a) Defines "vaccines for children program."

(b) Requires the Texas Department of Health to allow each health care provider participating in the vaccines for children program to select certain influenza vaccines and to use both the trivalent influenza virus and live, attenuated influenza vaccines.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2007.

