

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 2772
By: Eissler
County Affairs
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

A growing number of nonemergency ambulance providers are operating in the greater Houston area, including in Montgomery County. The Department of State Health Services is overwhelmed with its current responsibilities and cannot provide an effective local presence to provide oversight and inspection services to ensure high quality service and compliance with current regulations from these providers. Anecdotal evidence suggests many of these ambulance providers have equipment and operational deficiencies thereby jeopardizing public health and safety.

As more and more municipalities enact municipal ordinances governing nonemergency ambulance providers, we are seeing these providers move to areas that have no regulatory oversight. Municipalities in Montgomery County have the statutory authority to enact such regulations. However, this would create the possibility for confusion as each municipality could adopt a difference ordinance and promote inefficiency as ambulance providers would be required to register in multiple jurisdictions. It was recommended that the Montgomery County Hospital District seek legislative authority to promulgate and enforce a countywide, single regulatory policy.

H.B. 2772 amends the enabling legislation for the Montgomery County Hospital District to authorize its board of directors to adopt and enforce regulations more restrictive than those found in Chapter 773, Health and Safety Code, relating to ambulance service providers operating in the district to ensure public health and safety.

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. 2772 amends Section 11, Chapter 258, Acts of the 65th Legislature, Regular Session, 1977, to authorize the board of directors of the Montgomery County Hospital District to adopt and enforce regulations more restrictive than the regulations prescribed by the Emergency Health Care Act relating to ambulance service providers operating in the district to ensure public health and safety. The bill authorizes the district, through the board of directors, to impose an administrative fee on an ambulance service provider in an amount not to exceed the costs the district incurs in determining whether the ambulance service provider is qualified to offer ambulance services in the district.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2009.