

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

S.B. 292  
By: Nelson  
Public Health  
Committee Report (Unamended)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

One of the lessons learned from Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Ike is the importance of communicating with critical personnel during natural disasters. In recognition of the key role physicians play in times of emergency, the Texas Medical Board needs to be able to contact its physician-licensees in times of emergency.

S.B. 292 requires a licensed physician to provide to the board and update e-mail addresses, telephone numbers, and fax numbers that the board may use to contact its licensees in an emergency. The bill exempts such information from disclosure under state public information laws and prohibits its use for any reason other than disseminating information to the physician, a designated public health or emergency management official, or the Federation of State Medical Boards in a public health emergency.

### **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**

S.B. 292 amends the Occupations Code to require each person who holds a license to practice medicine in Texas to submit to the Texas Medical Board telephone numbers, fax numbers, and e-mail addresses, if available and as appropriate, that the board may use to contact the license holder in an emergency and requires a license holder to make the initial submission of such information not later than December 1, 2009. The bill requires a license holder who receives an initial registration permit to provide such contact information not later than the 30th day after the date the permit is issued, and requires each license holder who applies to renew a registration permit to submit the information with the renewal application. The bill requires a license holder to report to the board any change in the contact information not later than the 45th day after the date of the change.

S.B. 292 specifies that the contact information provided by a license holder under the bill's provisions is confidential and is not subject to disclosure under state public information laws. The bill prohibits the board from publishing, releasing, or making available the contact information provided by a license holder except, in the event of a public health emergency declared or invoked by the governor, the Department of State Health Services, or a federal agency, the board is authorized to publish, release, or make available the contact information provided by a license holder for the sole purpose of disseminating information to a license holder, a designated city, county, state, or federal public health or emergency management official, or the Federation of State Medical Boards.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

September 1, 2009.