

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 1129
By: Nichols
Human Services
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Emergency medical service (EMS) providers are most typically the first ones on the scene of a child injury or death and can provide valuable information and insight into the particulars of the deaths and risks to children. EMS providers are not represented on the child safety review team committee (committee). Additionally, family violence can contribute to child deaths. An expert on family violence is not currently included on the committee. Finally, state statute is ambiguous regarding the reports that the child fatality review team committee must make. Instead of aggregated data that are helpful in identifying trends among preventable child deaths, the committee is charged with issuing separate reports for each death.

As proposed, S.B. 1129 improves child safety by adding to the membership of the State Child Fatality Review Team Committee and clarifying certain data reporting requirements.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

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

ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Sections 264.502(b) and (c), Family Code, as follows:

(b) Requires the members of the child fatality review team committee (committee) who serve under Subsections (a)(1) through (3) (regarding the composition of the committee) to select the following additional committee members: a representative of emergency medical service providers and a provider of services of victims of family violence. Makes nonsubstantive changes.

(c) Provides that members of the committee selected under Subsection (b) serve three-year terms with the terms of six or seven, rather than five or six, members, as appropriate, expiring February 1 each year.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 264.503(f), Family Code, to require the committee, not later than April 1 of each year, to issue a report containing aggregate data collected by review teams regarding each, preventable child death, recommendations on how to prevent similar deaths, and details surrounding the Department of Family Protective Service's (DFPS) involvement with the child prior to the child's death. Requires the committee to submit a copy of the report, rather than publish a compilation of the reports published under this subsection during the year, rather than the compilation and submit a copy of the compilation, to the governor, lieutenant governor, speaker of the house of representatives, and DFPS, and make the report, rather than the compilation, available to the public. Makes conforming changes. Deletes existing text that requires the committee to issue a report for each preventable child death and that requires that the report include findings related to the child's death.

SECTION 3. Requires the members of the child fatality review team committee, under Section 264.502(a) (relating to the composition of the committee), Family Code, responsible for selecting the additional members of the committee required by Section 264.502(b) (relating to certain committee members who will select additional committee members), Family Code, as amended by this Act, to make those appointments not later than November 1, 2009.

SECTION 4. Effective date: September 1, 2009.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2009.