

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 1409
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Health & Human Services
9/24/2009
Enrolled

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The Department of State Health Services (DSHS) believes that the current definition of "first responder" listed in the Government Code is not inclusive enough. It excludes public health responders such as clinicians, epidemiologists, environmental health specialists, and certain assessment, response, and recovery teams. Furthermore, government decisionmakers including representatives of Texas military forces, local and state emergency management, communication and public information, public works, energy and utilities, and those working with food and water are also excluded.

This exclusion is important because ImmTrac, a program that immunizes first responders deployed to an emergency, only applies to those listed under the definition of first responder in Government Code. Broadening the definition to include more categories of relief workers will ensure more immunizations and reduce the risk of exposure to contagious diseases.

S.B. 1409 redefines "first responder" to mean any federal, state, local, or private personnel who is authorized to respond to a disaster, including certain individuals that provide support services during the prevention, response, and recovery phases of a disaster.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

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

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 161.0001(1-a), Health and Safety Code, to redefine "first responder."

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2009.