

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

S.B. 1409  
By: Shapleigh  
Public Health  
Committee Report (Unamended)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

The Department of State Health Services believes the definition of "first responder" is not inclusive enough. It excludes public health responders, such as clinicians, epidemiologists, environmental health specialists, and certain assessment, response, and recovery teams. Representatives of Texas military forces, local and state emergency management, communication and public information, public works, energy and utilities, and personnel working with food and water are also excluded.

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

S.B. 1409 redefines "first responder" for purposes of the immunization registry to mean any federal, state, local, or private personnel who may respond to a disaster or any related personnel that provide support services during the prevention, response, and recovery phase of a disaster.

### **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. 1409 amends the Health and Safety Code to redefine "first responder" for purposes of the immunization registry to mean any federal, state, local, or private personnel who may respond to a disaster or any related personnel that provide support services during the prevention, response, and recovery phases of a disaster, rather than to mean a public safety employee or volunteer whose duties include responding rapidly to an emergency. The bill specifies that the term includes public health and public safety personnel, commissioned law enforcement personnel, fire protection personnel, including volunteer firefighters, emergency medical services personnel, including hospital emergency facility staff, a member of the National Guard, a member of the Texas State Guard, or any other worker who responds to a disaster in the worker's scope of employment.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

On passage, or, if the act does not receive the necessary vote, the act takes effect September 1, 2009.