

By: McClendon

H.B. No. 505

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the creation of the health benefit plan innovations program in the Texas Department of Insurance.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Subtitle B, Title 5, Insurance Code, is amended by adding Chapter 525 to read as follows:

CHAPTER 525. HEALTH BENEFIT PLAN INNOVATIONS PROGRAM

Sec. 525.001. PROGRAM ESTABLISHED. (a) The department shall develop and implement a health benefit plan innovations program to study the number of uninsured individuals in this state, the reasons those individuals are uninsured, and possible solutions that would expand access to affordable health benefit plan coverage in this state.

(b) The department shall use department employees already employed in the research and analysis area of the life/health division of the department to implement the program. The department may not hire full-time employees whose primary job functions would solely be implementation of the program.

Sec. 525.002. PROGRAM COMPONENTS. (a) The program implemented under this chapter must:

(1) collect and analyze data concerning the number, age, and demographic characteristics of uninsured individuals in this state;

(2) identify the reasons why individuals in this state

1 are uninsured;

2 (3) examine and evaluate the effectiveness of programs
3 implemented in other states to reduce the number of uninsured
4 residents in those states;

5 (4) monitor and evaluate the health benefit market in
6 this state and determine whether residents of this state have
7 sufficient access to a variety of health benefit plan products to
8 ensure adequate health benefit plan coverage; and

9 (5) make recommendations to the legislature
10 concerning programs or initiatives to be implemented in this state
11 to reduce the number of uninsured residents in this state.

12 (b) The department shall coordinate program components that
13 involve market and cost research or data collection and analysis
14 with health benefit plan issuers and the Health and Human Services
15 Commission to ensure the collection and analysis of complete and
16 accurate information.

17 Sec. 525.003. REPORT. The department shall include in its
18 biennial report to the legislature under Section 32.022 the
19 program's findings concerning the information and recommendations
20 described by Section 525.002.

21 Sec. 525.004. FUNDING. The department may accept gifts and
22 grants from any party, including a health benefit plan issuer or a
23 foundation associated with a health benefit plan issuer, to assist
24 with funding the program. The department shall adopt rules
25 governing acceptance of donations that are consistent with Chapter
26 575, Government Code. Before adopting rules under this section,
27 the department shall:

1 (1) submit the proposed rules to the Texas Ethics
2 Commission for review; and

3 (2) consider that commission's recommendations
4 regarding the proposed rules.

5 Sec. 525.005. RULES. The commissioner may adopt rules as
6 necessary to implement this chapter.

7 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect September 1, 2009.