

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 824
By: Villarreal
Human Services
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Certain medical research suggests that involvement of the father during the prenatal period improves the likelihood of a healthy pregnancy, a healthy child, and a healthy family unit.

H.B. 824 seeks to increase a father's participation in the prenatal period of his child's life by requiring the attorney general to develop a publication describing the importance of a father's role during pregnancy for distribution to contractors and clients of the WIC program.

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

H.B. 824 amends the Health and Safety Code to require the attorney general to develop and periodically update a publication that describes the importance and long-term positive effects on children of a father's involvement during a mother's pregnancy and provides guidance to prospective fathers on the positive actions that they can take to support the pregnant mother during pregnancy and the effect those actions have on pregnancy outcomes. The bill requires the attorney general to make the publication available to any agency, organization, or other entity that contracts with the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC program) and on the attorney general's Internet website in a format that allows the public to download and print the publication.

H.B. 824 specifies the information required to be included in the publication. The bill requires the attorney general, in developing the publication, to consult with the Department of State Health Services (DSHS), as the state agency responsible for administering the WIC program and this state's program under the federal Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant Act, and the Texas Council on Family Violence. The bill requires an agency, organization, or other entity that contracts with the WIC program to make the publication available to each client receiving clinical or nutritional services under the program. The bill exempts DSHS and an agency, organization, or other entity providing services under the WIC program from compliance with the bill's provisions requiring those entities to make the publication available to each client receiving those services until the attorney general has made the publication available.

H.B. 824 requires a state agency that is affected by a provision of the bill to request a federal waiver or authorization if the agency determines that a waiver or authorization is necessary for the implementation of the provision and the bill authorizes the agency to delay implementation until the federal waiver or authorization is obtained.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2011.

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