BILL ANALYSIS

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Evidence suggests that recent increases in the rates of obesity, diabetes, and heart disease can all be linked to unhealthy food choices. Interested parties assert that the state could help address concerns regarding unhealthy eating habits by encouraging recipients of benefits under the supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP) to make healthy food choices. H.B. 3434 seeks to establish a pilot program to promote the purchase of healthy foods and offer additional benefits to SNAP recipients as an incentive to purchase such healthy foods.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission in SECTION 1 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

H.B. 3434 amends the Human Resources Code to add temporary provisions, set to expire September 1, 2018, to require the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to establish a pilot program under which a recipient of supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP) benefits receives additional benefits at the point of sale toward future purchases if the recipient purchases a nutritious food and under which a retailer is authorized to promote to a recipient of SNAP benefits that the recipient may receive additional benefits as a result of nutritious food purchases under the pilot program. The bill authorizes the executive commissioner of HHSC to adopt rules as necessary to implement the pilot program and requires such rules to include a list of nutritious foods approved for purposes of the pilot program. The bill requires HHSC, not later than September 1 of each year, to submit a report to the legislature regarding the pilot program. The bill requires the report to include an analysis of whether the additional benefits provided under the program have resulted in increased use of SNAP benefits on nutritious food purchases.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2013.