

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 294
By: Van de Putte
Public Health
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The Bexar County local behavioral health intervention pilot project, commonly known as Bexar Cares, provides for the diversion of children at risk of being placed in an alternative setting for behavior management to a system of care that includes behavioral health treatment placement for children and youth. Bexar Cares was implemented to eliminate barriers to sharing information and resources in order to provide coordinated and collaborative health care for those children, many of whom are from severely economically disadvantaged households or who are dealing with drug and alcohol abuse or teen pregnancy. Supporters note that the program has successfully identified and efficiently addressed mental health-related issues for children in the community, likely diverting them from the criminal justice system, which saves money and improves the lives of the participants and their families. S.B. 294 seeks to extend the pilot project, which is currently set to expire September 1, 2013.

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. 294 amends Sections 1(f) and (j), Chapter 356 (H.B. 1232), Acts of the 81st Legislature, Regular Session, 2009, to extend the Bexar County behavioral health intervention pilot project for children by postponing its scheduled expiration from September 1, 2013, to September 1, 2023, and to require the local mental health authority involved in the pilot project to report biennially to the Department of State Health Services.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, the 91st day after the last day of the legislative session.