

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 944
By: Nelson
Public Health
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

It has been noted that hospitals are not required to conduct criminal history checks for certain unlicensed employees working in a mental health unit, including, for example, psychiatric technicians and food service workers. Interested parties assert that hospitals should conduct such a background check to protect patients in mental health units of hospitals. S.B. 944 seeks to impose this requirement.

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. 944 amends the Health and Safety Code provisions relating to the nurse aide registry and criminal history checks of employees and applicants for employment in certain facilities serving the elderly, persons with disabilities, or persons with terminal illnesses, to expand the definition of "facility" to include a mental health service unit of a hospital licensed under the Texas Hospital Licensing Law.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2013.