

By: Bonnen of Galveston

H.B. No. 963

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the designation of certain optometrists, therapeutic optometrists, and ophthalmologists as preferred providers.

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

SECTION 1. Section 1301.051(e), Insurance Code, is amended to read as follows:

(e) An insurer may not withhold a designation to:

(1) a podiatrist described by Section 1301.0521; or

(2) an optometrist, therapeutic optometrist, or ophthalmologist described by Section 1301.0522.

SECTION 2. Subchapter B, Chapter 1301, Insurance Code, is amended by adding Section 1301.0522 to read as follows:

Sec. 1301.0522. DESIGNATION OF CERTAIN OPTOMETRISTS, THERAPEUTIC OPTOMETRISTS, AND OPHTHALMOLOGISTS AS PREFERRED PROVIDERS. (a) Notwithstanding Section 1301.051, an insurer may not withhold the designation of preferred provider to an optometrist or therapeutic optometrist licensed by the Texas Optometry Board or an ophthalmologist licensed by the Texas Medical Board who:

(1) joins the professional practice of a contracted preferred provider;

(2) applies to the insurer for designation as a preferred provider; and

(3) complies with the terms and conditions of

1 eligibility to be a preferred provider.

2 (b) An optometrist, therapeutic optometrist, or
3 ophthalmologist designated as a preferred provider under this
4 section must comply with the terms of the preferred provider
5 contract used by the insurer or the insurer's network provider.

6 SECTION 3. Section 1301.0522, Insurance Code, as added by
7 this Act, applies only to a contract between a preferred provider
8 and an insurer that is entered into or renewed on or after September
9 1, 2015. A contract between a preferred provider and an insurer that
10 is entered into or renewed before September 1, 2015, is governed by
11 the law as it existed immediately before the effective date of this
12 Act, and that law is continued in effect for that purpose.

13 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect September 1, 2015.