

By: Klick, Price, Fallon, Crownover, et al.

H.B. No. 2950

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the Task Force on Infectious Disease Preparedness and Response.

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 81, Health and Safety Code, as amended by S.B. No. 219, Acts of the 84th Legislature, Regular Session, 2015, is amended by adding Subchapter J to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER J. TASK FORCE ON INFECTIOUS DISEASE PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

Sec. 81.401. DEFINITION. In this subchapter, "task force" means the Task Force on Infectious Disease Preparedness and Response.

Sec. 81.402. TASK FORCE; DUTIES. (a) The Task Force on Infectious Disease Preparedness and Response is created as an advisory board to the department.

(b) The task force shall:

(1) provide expert, evidence-based assessments, protocols, and recommendations related to state responses to infectious diseases, including Ebola, and a strategic emergency management plan for state and local levels of government;

(2) develop a comprehensive plan to ensure that Texas is prepared for the potential of widespread outbreak of infectious diseases, such as the Ebola virus, and can provide rapid response that effectively protects the safety and well-being of citizens of

1 this state;

2 (3) evaluate the supplies and resources available to  
3 address an infectious disease outbreak; and

4 (4) serve as a reliable and transparent source of  
5 information and education for Texas leadership and citizens.

6 (c) In developing the plan described by Subsection (b)(2),  
7 the task force shall:

8 (1) use the significant expertise of medical  
9 professionals in Texas and other states;

10 (2) collaborate with local government officials and  
11 local health officials;

12 (3) use, as practicable, the Texas Emergency  
13 Preparedness Plan and structure;

14 (4) identify various responses necessary in the event  
15 of an epidemic of infectious disease;

16 (5) establish a command and control structure that  
17 will ensure effective preparations and response if the governor  
18 takes emergency action under Chapter 418, Government Code, or other  
19 law; and

20 (6) coordinate with appropriate entities to ensure  
21 public awareness and education regarding any pandemic threat.

22 Sec. 81.403. APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS; TERMS. (a) The  
23 commissioner may appoint members of the task force as necessary,  
24 including members from relevant state agencies, members with  
25 expertise in infectious diseases and other issues involved in the  
26 prevention of the spread of infectious diseases, and members from  
27 institutions of higher education in this state. The commissioner

1 shall appoint to the task force:

2 (1) at least one member who is a representative of a  
3 local health authority serving a rural area;

4 (2) at least one member who is a representative of a  
5 local health authority serving an urban area;

6 (3) at least one member who is a licensed physician;

7 (4) at least one member who is a licensed nurse;

8 (5) at least one member who is emergency medical  
9 services personnel, as defined by Section 773.003; and

10 (6) at least one member representing a hospital.

11 (b) The commissioner shall appoint a director of the task  
12 force from among the members of the task force.

13 (c) The commissioner may fill any vacancy that occurs on the  
14 task force and may appoint additional members as needed.

15 (d) Members of the task force serve at the pleasure of the  
16 commissioner.

17 (e) A state or local employee appointed to the task force  
18 shall perform any duties required by the task force in addition to  
19 the regular duties of the employee.

20 Sec. 81.404. REPORTS. (a) The task force shall report to  
21 the department, governor, legislature, Texas Medical Board, and any  
22 relevant medical associations as often as necessary to make  
23 recommendations for updating protocols for addressing infectious  
24 diseases.

25 (b) The task force shall make written reports on its  
26 findings and recommendations, including legislative  
27 recommendations, to the department, governor, and legislature on

1 December 1 of each even-numbered year.

2 Sec. 81.405. MEETINGS. (a) The task force shall meet at  
3 times and locations as determined by the director of the task force.

4 (b) The task force may meet telephonically in accordance  
5 with Section 551.125(b)(3), Government Code.

6 (c) The task force may hold public hearings to gather  
7 information. The task force shall endeavor to meet in various parts  
8 of the state to encourage local input.

9 (d) Notwithstanding Section 551.144, Government Code, or  
10 any other law, the task force may hold a closed meeting to discuss  
11 matters that are confidential by state or federal law or to ensure  
12 public security or law enforcement needs. A closed meeting held as  
13 provided by this subsection must be held as otherwise provided by  
14 Chapter 551, Government Code.

15 Sec. 81.406. ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT. State agencies with  
16 members on the task force shall provide administrative support for  
17 the task force.

18 Sec. 81.407. REIMBURSEMENT. Task force members serve  
19 without compensation and are not entitled to reimbursement for  
20 travel expenses.

21 Sec. 81.408. INFECTIOUS DISEASE EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS  
22 FACILITIES AT HEALTH CARE-RELATED INSTITUTIONS. (a) If the task  
23 force adopts a comprehensive plan under Section 81.402, the  
24 commission may enter into contracts or agreements to assist in the  
25 establishment of infectious disease emergency preparedness  
26 facilities at health care-related institutions in this state,  
27 consistent with the comprehensive plan, if the task force finds

1 that the contracts or agreements are necessary to implement the  
2 comprehensive plan. The contracts or agreements may provide for  
3 payment by the commission to develop and equip infectious disease  
4 emergency preparedness facilities, consistent with the  
5 comprehensive plan, at health care-related institutions in this  
6 state, as well as for materials, equipment, services, or other  
7 items the commission considers necessary to implement this section.

8 (b) This section expires September 1, 2017.

9 SECTION 2. As soon as practicable after the effective date  
10 of this Act, the commissioner of state health services shall make  
11 appointments to the Task Force on Infectious Disease Preparedness  
12 and Response required under Subchapter J, Chapter 81, Health and  
13 Safety Code, as added by this Act.

14 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives  
15 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as  
16 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this  
17 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this  
18 Act takes effect September 1, 2015.