

By: Wu

H.B. No. 709

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT
2 relating to a study conducted by Texas A&M University on services
3 for children and families available in rural counties for children
4 in the managing conservatorship of the Department of Family and
5 Protective Services.

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

7 SECTION 1. (a) In this section:

8 (1) "Commission" means the Health and Human Services
9 Commission.

10 (2) "Department" means the Department of Family and
11 Protective Services.

12 (3) "Rural county" means a county with a population of
13 less than 50,000.

14 (4) "Services for children and families" includes
15 mental health services, medical services, specialized medical
16 services, and child protective services.

17 (b) The board of regents of The Texas A&M University System
18 shall designate a department or entity at Texas A&M University to
19 conduct a study on services for children and families available to
20 be provided in rural counties to children in the managing
21 conservatorship of the department and to the parents of those
22 children. The study must:

23 (1) determine what types of services for children and
24 families are available to the children and parents in rural

1 counties;

2 (2) determine the number of clinics, physicians, and
3 other service providers that are available to provide services for
4 children and families to children and parents in rural counties;

5 (3) determine the number of clinics, offices of
6 physicians, and other providers of services for children and
7 families in rural counties that have closed in the preceding five
8 years;

9 (4) propose actions the commission and department can
10 take to address any shortage in the provision of services for
11 children and families to children and parents in rural counties,
12 including:

13 (A) the provision of services through
14 telemedicine medical services and telehealth services in rural
15 counties;

16 (B) partnerships between the commission or
17 department and institutions of higher education to provide services
18 in rural counties; and

19 (C) incentives offered by the commission or
20 department to service providers for providing services in rural
21 counties; and

22 (5) make recommendations to the legislature for
23 increasing the quality and quantity of services provided to the
24 children and parents in rural counties.

25 (c) The department or entity at Texas A&M University
26 designated by the board of regents to conduct the study shall
27 provide the study results and recommendations to the governor,

1 lieutenant governor, speaker of the house of representatives, and
2 each member of the legislature not later than December 1, 2018.

3 (d) This section expires September 1, 2019.

4 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect September 1, 2017.