

By: Lucio, Garcia

S.B. No. 1693

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to a study of seniors with a visual impairment by the Aging Texas Well Advisory Committee.

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

SECTION 1. (a) In this section, "advisory committee" means the Aging Texas Well Advisory Committee.

(b) The executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission shall direct the advisory committee to assist the commission to:

(1) determine the appropriate level of independent living services for the growing number of seniors in the state with visual impairment; and

(2) make recommendations on the provision of services to seniors described by Subdivision (1).

(c) Notwithstanding Chapter 551, Government Code, or any other law, in implementing its duties under this Act, the advisory committee may meet by telephone conference call, videoconference, or other similar telecommunication method. A meeting held by telephone conference call, videoconference, or other similar telecommunication method is subject to the requirements of Sections 551.125(c), (d), (e), and (f), Government Code.

(d) The advisory committee shall conduct a study to determine the projected growth and geographic distribution of seniors with a visual impairment in the next 5 to 10 years and

1 methods for improving and expanding services, including  
2 independent living services, to those seniors. The study must:

3 (1) identify the barriers to expanding health care  
4 services to seniors with a visual impairment;

5 (2) include methods for expanding coordination  
6 efforts with and involvement by public and private entities;

7 (3) recommend a training curriculum for state agency  
8 personnel who provide direct intervention and independent living  
9 services to seniors with a visual impairment;

10 (4) identify and recommend a strategy to increase the  
11 number of state agency personnel who provide direct intervention  
12 and independent living services to seniors with a visual  
13 impairment; and

14 (5) determine potential public and private  
15 collaborators that provide services to seniors with a visual  
16 impairment, including:

17 (A) assessing the current level of  
18 collaboration;

19 (B) identifying the barriers preventing a  
20 greater level of collaboration than the current level of  
21 collaboration;

22 (C) identifying the methods, additional  
23 incentives, and additional benefits this state may offer to  
24 increase collaboration, coordination, and partnerships;

25 (D) determining the role of public and private  
26 entities that provide services to persons with a visual impairment  
27 who are not blind; and

1                   (E) establishing methods for incentivizing  
2 private entities to provide services to seniors with a visual  
3 impairment.

4           (e) The advisory committee shall develop, in collaboration  
5 with private entities and other organizations that assist  
6 individuals with a visual impairment, methods to publicize the  
7 services available to seniors with a visual impairment. The Health  
8 and Human Services Commission may solicit and accept funding for  
9 and contract with a private entity for implementing an advisory  
10 committee recommendation under this subsection.

11           (f) The recommendations required by Subsection (b) of this  
12 section must be in the form of a new initiative, an immediate  
13 proposed regulatory change by a state agency, a proposed statutory  
14 amendment, or a suggested funding level.

15           (g) The advisory committee shall develop and submit a  
16 written report on the study, publicity methods, and recommendations  
17 developed by the advisory committee to the governor, the lieutenant  
18 governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, and each  
19 member of the legislature not later than November 1, 2018.

20           (h) This Act expires June 1, 2019.

21           SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives  
22 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as  
23 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this  
24 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this  
25 Act takes effect September 1, 2017.