

By: Lucio

S.B. No. 1693

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

1
2 relating to the establishment of the Seniors with a Visual
3 Impairment Task Force.

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

5 SECTION 1. (a) In this section, "task force" means the
6 Seniors with a Visual Impairment Task Force.

7 (b) The Department of State Health Services shall establish
8 the Seniors with a Visual Impairment Task Force to develop and make
9 recommendations for providing services to the growing number of
10 seniors in this state with a visual impairment.

11 (c) The commissioner of state health services shall appoint
12 an odd number of members to the task force. The commissioner may
13 only appoint a person who volunteers to serve on the task force.
14 The commissioner must appoint members who represent:

- 15 (1) an applicable state agency;
16 (2) a nonprofit organization;
17 (3) a health care provider association;
18 (4) an insurance association;
19 (5) a physician association;
20 (6) a transportation service provider;
21 (7) a consumer group; and
22 (8) the state demographer.

23 (d) A task force member is not entitled to compensation for
24 service on the task force but is entitled to reimbursement for

1 actual and necessary expenses incurred in performing task force
2 duties. The task force may accept gifts, grants, and donations to
3 pay for those expenses.

4 (e) The commissioner of state health services shall
5 designate a member of the task force to serve as presiding officer.
6 The members of the task force shall elect any other necessary
7 officers.

8 (f) The task force shall meet at least quarterly at the call
9 of the presiding officer.

10 (g) Notwithstanding Chapter 551, Government Code, or any
11 other law, the task force may meet by telephone conference call,
12 videoconference, or other similar telecommunication method. A
13 meeting held by telephone conference call, videoconference, or
14 other similar telecommunication method is subject to the
15 requirements of Sections 551.125(c), (d), (e), and (f), Government
16 Code.

17 (h) The task force shall conduct a study to determine the
18 projected growth and geographic distribution of seniors with a
19 visual impairment in the next 5 to 10 years and methods for
20 improving and expanding services to those seniors. The study must:

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

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

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

1 (4) determine potential public and private
2 collaborators that provide services to seniors with a visual
3 impairment, including:

4 (A) assessing the current level of
5 collaboration;

6 (B) identifying the barriers preventing a
7 greater level of collaboration than the current level of
8 collaboration;

9 (C) identifying the methods, additional
10 incentives, and additional benefits this state may offer to
11 increase collaboration, coordination, and partnerships;

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

15 (E) establishing methods for incentivizing
16 private entities to provide services to seniors with a visual
17 impairment.

18 (i) The task force shall develop, in collaboration with
19 private entities and other organizations that assist individuals
20 with a visual impairment, methods to publicize the services
21 available to seniors with a visual impairment. The Department of
22 State Health Services may solicit and accept funding for and
23 contract with a private entity for implementing a task force
24 recommendation under this subsection.

25 (j) The task force shall develop recommendations to address
26 the problems of seniors with a visual impairment. The
27 recommendations must be in the form of a new initiative, an

1 immediate proposed regulatory change by a state agency, a proposed
2 statutory amendment, or a suggested funding level.

3 (k) The task force shall develop and submit a written report
4 on the study, publicity methods, and recommendations developed by
5 the task force to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the
6 speaker of the house of representatives, and each member of the
7 legislature not later than November 1, 2018.

8 (l) The task force is abolished and this Act expires June 1,
9 2019.

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