

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 1477
By: Price
Public Health
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

There are concerns that funding for certain emergency medical services and training was negatively affected due to changes in law allowing funds in the permanent fund for emergency medical services and trauma care to be used for other purposes. C.S.H.B. 1477 seeks to make more funds available for such services and training by, among other things, creating the emergency medical services assistance program account, requiring the comptroller of public accounts to deposit a portion of state traffic fine revenue to the credit of that account, and expanding the use of grants under the emergency medical services assistance program.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission in SECTIONS 3, 4, and 8 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 1477 amends the Health and Safety Code to create the emergency medical services assistance program account as a dedicated account in the general revenue fund of the state treasury and to limit the appropriation of money in the account to the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) to provide grants, in addition to funding available from other sources, to the following:

- emergency medical services (EMS) providers applying for assistance under the program;
- trauma service area regional advisory councils;
- provide funding to a general academic teaching institution, medical and dental unit, other agency of higher education, or public technical institute offering the educational curriculum under the emergency medical services assistance program; or
- EMS personnel applying for assistance under the Emergency Medical Services Scholarship Program established by the bill.

The bill removes the authorization for the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to use money from the permanent fund for emergency medical services and trauma care to provide grants to EMS providers applying for program assistance or to provide funding to such an institution, unit, agency, or institute.

C.S.H.B. 1477 requires the executive commissioner by rule to establish the Emergency Medical Services Scholarship Program to provide financial assistance to EMS personnel to pay tuition

and other applicable fees for eligible coursework at institutions of higher education. The bill requires the executive commissioner to adopt rules for determining eligibility under the scholarship program and the coursework that qualifies for an awarded scholarship. The bill authorizes EMS personnel to apply to DSHS in the form and manner provided by executive commissioner rule to receive a scholarship and authorizes DSHS to provide a grant from the emergency medical services assistance program account to an applicant who DSHS determines is eligible for assistance under the program.

C.S.H.B. 1477 includes grants to trauma service area regional advisory councils and grants for funding the scholarship program among the grants provided under the emergency medical services assistance program.

C.S.H.B. 1477 amends the Transportation Code to decrease from 67 percent to 57 percent the portion of the money received by the comptroller of public accounts from state traffic fines that is to be deposited to the credit of the undedicated portion of the general revenue fund and to require the comptroller to deposit 10 percent of the money received from such fines to the credit of the emergency medical services assistance program account.

C.S.H.B. 1477 requires the executive commissioner to adopt rules as necessary to implement the bill's provisions. The bill establishes that DSHS is required to implement a provision of the bill only if the legislature appropriates money specifically for that purpose and that DSHS may, but is not required to, implement a provision of the bill using other appropriations available for that purpose if the legislature does not appropriate money specifically for that purpose.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2019.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 1477 may differ from the original in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following summarizes the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

The substitute includes a provision creating the emergency medical services assistance program account for appropriations to DSHS to provide certain grants. The substitute removes the authorization for the executive commissioner of HHSC to use money from the permanent fund for emergency medical services and trauma care to provide certain of those grants. The substitute changes the account to whose credit the comptroller is required to deposit 10 percent of the revenue from state traffic fines from that permanent fund to the emergency medical services assistance program account.

The substitute includes a provision establishing that DSHS is required to implement a provision of the bill only if the legislature appropriates money specifically for that purpose and that DSHS may, but is not required to, implement a provision of the bill using other appropriations available for that purpose if the legislature does not appropriate money specifically for that purpose.