

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 1124
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Public Health
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

It has been noted that border public health departments are on the front line to safeguard Texas and the nation from new and emerging public health threats and that, because these areas also face challenges associated with access to care, transmigratory populations, poverty, and lack of health insurance, border public health departments must take these challenges into account when responding to a public health threat. S.B. 1124 seeks to address these concerns by directing the Department of State Health Services to establish a border public health response team to deploy in response to outbreaks, public health threats, and disasters in the border counties.

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 this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

S.B. 1124 amends the Health and Safety Code to require the Department of State Health Services (DSHS), not later than December 1, 2019, to establish a border public health response team to deploy in response to public health threats declared by the commissioner of state health services and declared disasters in border counties. The bill sets out the composition of the response team. The bill requires DSHS, in consultation with the response team and as necessary, to enter into memoranda of understanding with other state agencies to develop policies, plans, and procedures to facilitate an effective response to a declared public health threat or disaster. The bill requires DSHS to provide, or contract to provide, training, equipment, and support staff to the response team to enhance the team's response efforts, as appropriate.

S.B. 1124 requires the response team, during a declared public health threat or disaster in a border county and as appropriate, to do the following:

- assess health infrastructure and response capabilities for the threat or disaster in a border county;
- develop appropriate responses for the threat or disaster in a border county; and
- address language, cultural, and environmental factors that are unique to responding to the threat or disaster in a border county.

The bill requires DSHS to coordinate with the Health and Human Services Commission, the office of the governor, the federal government, and any other appropriate entity for funding to support the response team's activities. The bill authorizes DSHS to accept on behalf of the

response team a gift, grant, or donation from any source to carry out the purposes of the response team.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2019.