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H.B. No. 1782

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to a plan to increase the use of telemedicine medical services, telehealth services, and interprofessional Internet consultations in this state.

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

SECTION 1. Subchapter B, Chapter 531, Government Code, is amended by adding Section 531.021611 to read as follows:

Sec. 531.021611. ACTION PLAN TO EXPAND TELEMEDICINE MEDICAL SERVICES AND TELEHEALTH SERVICES. (a) The commission shall develop and implement an action plan to:

(1) expand the use of and increase access to telemedicine medical services, telehealth services, and related mobile applications for those services by health care providers for the residents of this state; and

(2) increase the availability of critical medical care and health care services to residents in this state in areas determined by the commission to be medically underserved.

(b) In developing and implementing the action plan under Subsection (a), the commission shall:

(1) evaluate, in collaboration with the Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Task Force established under Chapter 34, Health and Safety Code, and other interested persons, the use of telemedicine medical services for women during pregnancy and the postpartum period;

1           (2) seek the assistance of the Texas Hospital  
2 Association, the Texas Medical Association, the Texas Nurses  
3 Association, The University of Texas System Virtual Health Network,  
4 teaching hospitals, and the statewide health coordinating council;  
5 and

6           (3) consult with health care providers, advocacy  
7 groups, relevant federal agencies, and any other interested persons  
8 the commission considers necessary to develop the action plan  
9 required by this section.

10          (c) The action plan developed under Subsection (a) must  
11 include:

12           (1) short-term and long-term plan recommendations,  
13 including policy initiatives and reforms necessary to implement the  
14 plan;

15           (2) statutory and administrative reforms necessary to  
16 implement the plan; and

17           (3) options for the funding necessary to implement the  
18 plan.

19          (d) The commission shall:

20           (1) not later than September 1, 2021:

21           (A) submit to the governor and the legislature  
22 the recommendations, the statutory and administrative reforms, and  
23 the funding options described in Subsection (c) and short-term and  
24 long-term plans to implement those recommendations, reforms, and  
25 options; and

26           (B) begin implementing the short-term plan;

27           (2) not later than September 1, 2023, fully implement

1 the short-term plan;

2 (3) not later than September 1, 2029, fully implement  
3 the long-term plan; and

4 (4) include the short-term and long-term plans in the  
5 update of the strategic plan for health and human services under  
6 Section 531.022.

7 (e) This section expires September 1, 2030.

8 SECTION 2. Subchapter B, Chapter 531, Government Code, is  
9 amended by adding Section 531.02166 to read as follows:

10 Sec. 531.02166. INTERPROFESSIONAL INTERNET CONSULTATIONS  
11 PILOT PROGRAM. (a) Not later than September 1, 2021, and subject  
12 to Subsection (e), the commission shall develop and implement a  
13 pilot program through which the commission provides or contracts  
14 with a third party to provide technical assistance to train  
15 Medicaid providers regarding the use of interprofessional Internet  
16 consultations for Medicaid recipients in rural and medically  
17 underserved areas. The program must be designed to determine  
18 whether the use of technology improves access to specialty care,  
19 including pediatric, prenatal, postnatal, and behavioral health  
20 services, for Medicaid recipients.

21 (b) The commission shall:

22 (1) implement the pilot program in:

23 (A) at least one:

24 (i) federally qualified health center;

25 (ii) municipal public health system;

26 (iii) clinic that is a member of a nonprofit

27 membership association that supports charitable clinics in this

1 state; and

2 (iv) rural community center; and

3 (B) a maximum of 20 health clinics; and

4 (2) ensure that a third party contracted to provide  
5 technical assistance described under Subsection (a):

6 (A) has significant experience integrating  
7 telehealth services, telemedicine medical services, and online  
8 consultations with electronic health records; and

9 (B) has a current contract with the United States  
10 Department of Health and Human Services Health Resources and  
11 Services Administration as a regional telehealth resource center.

12 (c) The commission shall examine cost avoidance that  
13 results from providing telemedicine medical services to Medicaid  
14 recipients in rural and medically underserved communities through  
15 the pilot program, including cost avoidance that results from:

16 (1) reducing recipient wait times for specialty care  
17 providers;

18 (2) improving access to specialty care;

19 (3) reducing the number of recipient referrals; and

20 (4) reducing the number of miles traveled by  
21 recipients for specialty care consultations.

22 (d) Not later than December 31, 2022, the commission shall  
23 report to the legislature regarding the status and results of the  
24 pilot program and make recommendations regarding whether to  
25 continue, expand, or terminate the program.

26 (e) The commission is required to implement this section  
27 only if the legislature appropriates money specifically for that

1 purpose. If the legislature does not appropriate money  
2 specifically for that purpose, the commission may, but is not  
3 required to, implement this section using other appropriations  
4 available for that purpose.

5 (f) This section expires September 1, 2023.

6 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2019.