

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 1353
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Health & Human Services
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Enrolled

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Texas needs better data to improve the equity of the distribution of vaccines. Because Texans do not have equal access to lifesaving immunizations, including the COVID-19 vaccine, some Texans are more likely to suffer and die from preventable diseases. Black, brown, and rural Texans all experience inequities in access to vaccines.

The Department of State Health Services (DSHS) is currently required to submit an immunization report to the legislature every two years. If a public health disaster occurs in the two years before a DSHS immunization report, S.B. 1353 adds reporting of immunization administration by race and geography to understand access challenges experienced by communities of color and rural Texas. It adds reporting of immunizations by age to ensure that vulnerable seniors and other medically fragile populations can be appropriately and efficiently vaccinated. It also requires DSHS to make recommendations to reduce disparities in immunization accessibility and estimate the economic benefits of reducing these disparities. No personal information will be released to the public. No data may be sold.

S.B. 1353 amends current law relating to the content of certain immunization records and of certain biennial legislative reports on immunizations issued by the Department of State Health Services.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

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

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 161.0074, Health and Safety Code, by adding Subsection (d), as follows:

(d) Requires that the report issued by the Department of State Health Services to the legislature regarding immunizations, if a public health disaster was declared under Chapter 81 (Communicable Diseases) during the preceding two years, in addition to the information required under Subsection (c) (relating to requiring that certain information be included in the report to the legislature), for immunizations that immunize an individual against the communicable disease subject to the declaration:

- (1) include information by county on the accessibility to the immunizations of county residents by age, race, and geographic location, provided the information does not personally identify any individual;
- (2) identify and assess disparities in access to the immunizations by age, race, and geographic location, including an assessment of immunization accessibility in each county;
- (3) include the estimated economic benefit to this state of reducing disparities in immunization accessibility;

(4) include recommendations for reducing disparities in immunization accessibility; and

(5) include recommendations for legislative action to increase immunization rates.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 161.008, Health and Safety Code, by adding Subsection (b-1), as follows:

(b-1) Requires that an immunization record provided by a health care provider as required by Section 161.00705 (Recording Administration of Immunization and Medication for Disasters and Emergencies) for inclusion in the immunization registry during a public health disaster declared under Chapter 81 contain the race, age, ethnicity, and county of residence of the individual immunized. Provides that this subsection applies only to immunizations that immunize an individual against the communicable disease subject to the declaration.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2021.