87R1221 MM-F

By:  King of Hemphill H.B. No. 423

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the drug testing of certain persons seeking benefits under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program.

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

SECTION 1.  Subchapter B, Chapter 31, Human Resources Code, is amended by adding Section 31.0321 to read as follows:

Sec. 31.0321.  DRUG SCREENING AND TESTING; ELIGIBILITY. (a) In this section, "controlled substance" and "marihuana" have the meanings assigned by Chapter 481, Health and Safety Code.

(b)  Except as provided in Subsections (h) and (i):

(1)  each adult applicant for financial assistance benefits, including an applicant applying solely on behalf of a child, who initially applies for those benefits or who applies for the continuation of those benefits must submit to a marihuana and controlled substance use screening assessment; and

(2)  each minor parent who is the head of household must submit to a marihuana and controlled substance use screening assessment on the initial application for financial assistance benefits and on any application for the continuation of those benefits.

(c)  A person whose marihuana and controlled substance use screening assessment conducted under this section indicates good cause to suspect the person of use of marihuana, other than low-THC cannabis authorized by Chapter 169, Occupations Code, or use of a controlled substance not prescribed for the person by a health care practitioner shall submit to a drug test.

(d)  Except as provided in Subsections (f) and (g), a person whose drug test conducted under this section indicates the presence in the person's body of marihuana, other than low-THC cannabis as described by Subsection (c), or of a controlled substance not prescribed for the person as described by that subsection is ineligible for financial assistance benefits, and is ineligible to receive those benefits on behalf of the person's family, for a period of 12 months beginning on the first day of the month after the month in which the drug test was administered.

(e)  Except as provided in Subsections (f) and (g), if, following a 12-month period of ineligibility under Subsection (d), a person reapplies for financial assistance benefits and the results of a drug test required by Subsection (h) indicate the presence in the person's body of marihuana, other than low-THC cannabis as described by Subsection (c), or of a controlled substance not prescribed as described by that subsection, the person is ineligible for financial assistance benefits, and is ineligible to receive those benefits on behalf of the person's family, for a period of 36 months beginning on the first day of the month after the month in which the drug test was administered.

(f)  A person who is denied financial assistance benefits because of the results of a drug test conducted under this section may reapply for financial assistance benefits six months after the first day of the month after the month in which the drug test was administered if the person provides proof of the person's successful completion of or current enrollment in a substance abuse treatment program. A person reapplying for financial assistance benefits must submit to a drug test as required by Subsection (h), regardless of whether the person is continuing to receive substance abuse treatment.

(g)  A person's eligibility for financial assistance benefits is not affected by the results of a drug test conducted under Subsection (c) indicating the presence in the person's body of marihuana, other than low-THC cannabis as described by Subsection (c), or of a controlled substance not prescribed as described by that subsection if, not later than the 10th day after the date the person is notified of the results of the drug test, the person enrolls in a substance abuse treatment program. In adopting rules for the implementation of this section, the executive commissioner shall include rules that require:

(1)  a person who is subject to this subsection to submit proof of continued enrollment in or successful completion of a substance abuse treatment program in order to maintain the person's eligibility for financial assistance benefits; and

(2)  a substance abuse treatment program that is under contract with or receives funding from the commission to give a priority for services to an applicant who is a person subject to this subsection.

(h)  A person who is denied financial assistance benefits because of the results of a drug test conducted under this section must submit to a drug test, without first submitting to a marihuana and controlled substance use screening assessment, at the time of any reapplication for financial assistance benefits and on any application for the continuation of those benefits.

(i)  A person who has been convicted of a felony drug offense must submit to a drug test, without first submitting to a marihuana and controlled substance use screening assessment, at the time of an initial application for financial assistance benefits and on any application for the continuation of those benefits.

(j)  If a person is denied eligibility for financial assistance benefits three times because of the results of a drug test conducted under this section, the person is permanently ineligible for those benefits and is permanently ineligible to receive those benefits on behalf of the person's family.

(k)  Before denying financial assistance benefits under this section, the commission must:

(1)  notify the person who submitted to a drug test of the results of the test and the commission's proposed determination of ineligibility; and

(2)  confirm the results of the drug test through a second drug test or other appropriate method.

(l)  The results of a drug test administered as provided by Subsection (k)(2) to confirm the results of a previous drug test are not considered for purposes of Subsection (e) or (g).

(m)  The denial of financial assistance benefits to an applicant because of the results of a drug test conducted under this section does not affect the eligibility of the person's child or family members for those benefits.

(n)  If a parent or caretaker relative of a dependent child is ineligible to receive financial assistance benefits on behalf of the child because of the results of a drug test conducted under this section, the parent or caretaker relative, as applicable, shall select a protective payee to receive financial assistance benefits on behalf of the child. The parent or caretaker relative, as applicable, may choose an immediate family member to serve as the protective payee or, if an immediate family member is not available or declines to serve as the protective payee, the person may choose another person approved by the commission. A person must submit to a marihuana and controlled substance use screening assessment to establish the person's eligibility to serve as a protective payee. A person whose marihuana and controlled substance use screening assessment indicates good cause to suspect the person of use of marihuana, other than low-THC cannabis as described by Subsection (c), or of use of a controlled substance not prescribed as described by that subsection shall submit to a drug test to establish the eligibility of the person to serve as a protective payee. A person whose drug test conducted under this section indicates the presence in the person's body of marihuana, other than low-THC cannabis as described by Subsection (c), or of a controlled substance not prescribed as described by that subsection is ineligible to serve as a protective payee.

(o)  The commission shall:

(1)  use the most efficient and cost-effective marihuana and controlled substance use screening assessment tool that the commission and the Department of State Health Services can develop based on validated marihuana and controlled substance use screening assessment tools; and

(2)  pay the cost of any marihuana and controlled substance use screening assessment or drug test administered under this section out of the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families block grant funds.

(p)  The commission shall provide each person who is denied financial assistance benefits as a result of a drug test conducted under this section with a list of substance abuse treatment providers located in the area where the person resides.

(q)  Nothing in this section requires the commission or the state to provide or pay for substance abuse treatment for a person whose drug test conducted under this section indicates the presence in the person's body of marihuana, other than low-THC cannabis as described by Subsection (c), or of a controlled substance not prescribed as described by that subsection.

(r)  The executive commissioner shall adopt rules implementing this section.

SECTION 2.  (a) Section 31.0321, Human Resources Code, as added by this Act, applies to:

(1)  an adult applicant, including an applicant applying solely on behalf of a child, who initially applies for financial assistance benefits under Chapter 31, Human Resources Code, on or after the effective date of this Act;

(2)  a minor parent who is the head of household who initially applies for financial assistance benefits under Chapter 31, Human Resources Code, on or after the effective date of this Act;

(3)  an adult applicant, including an applicant applying solely on behalf of a child, who applies for the continuation of financial assistance benefits under Chapter 31, Human Resources Code, on or after the effective date of this Act; and

(4)  a minor parent who is the head of household who applies for the continuation of financial assistance benefits under Chapter 31, Human Resources Code, on or after the effective date of this Act.

(b)  Except as provided by Subsections (a)(3) and (4) of this section, an adult applicant, including an applicant applying solely on behalf of a child, or a minor parent who is the head of household who applied for financial assistance benefits under Chapter 31, Human Resources Code, before the effective date of this Act is governed by the law in effect when the person applied for financial assistance benefits, and that law is continued in effect for that purpose.

SECTION 3.  If before implementing any provision of this Act a state agency determines that a waiver or authorization from a federal agency is necessary for implementation of that provision, the agency affected by the provision shall request the waiver or authorization and may delay implementing that provision until the waiver or authorization is granted.

SECTION 4.  This Act takes effect September 1, 2021.