

By: Lucio III

H.B. No. 729

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the establishment of a border public health response team.

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 161, Health and Safety Code, is amended by adding Subchapter X to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER X. BORDER PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE TEAM

Sec. 161.701. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

(1) "Border county" means a county adjacent to the international border with Mexico.

(2) "Disaster" has the meaning assigned by Section 418.004, Government Code. The term includes a state of disaster declared by:

(A) the president of the United States under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. Section 5121 et seq.);

(B) the governor under Section 418.014, Government Code; or

(C) the presiding officer of the governing body of a political subdivision under Section 418.108, Government Code.

(3) "Response team" means the border public health response team established under Section 161.702.

(4) "Sanitarian" has the meaning assigned by Section 1953.001, Occupations Code.

1 Sec. 161.702. BORDER PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE TEAM. The
2 department shall establish a border public health response team to
3 deploy in response to public health threats declared by the
4 commissioner and declared disasters in border counties.

5 Sec. 161.703. COMPOSITION OF RESPONSE TEAM. The response
6 team may be composed of the following members appointed by the
7 commissioner:

8 (1) an epidemiologist;

9 (2) a sanitarian;

10 (3) a nurse;

11 (4) a public health specialist; and

12 (5) any other person the commissioner considers
13 appropriate.

14 Sec. 161.704. DEPARTMENT DUTIES. (a) The department, in
15 consultation with the response team, shall, as necessary, enter
16 into memoranda of understanding with other state agencies to
17 develop policies, plans, and procedures to facilitate an effective
18 response to a declared public health threat or disaster.

19 (b) The department shall provide, or contract to provide,
20 training, equipment, and support staff to the response team to
21 enhance the team's response efforts, as appropriate.

22 Sec. 161.705. RESPONSE TEAM DUTIES. During a declared
23 public health threat or disaster in a border county, the response
24 team shall, as appropriate:

25 (1) assess health infrastructure and response
26 capabilities for the threat or disaster in a border county;

27 (2) develop appropriate responses for the threat or

1 disaster in a border county; and

2 (3) address language, cultural, and environmental
3 factors that are unique to responding to the threat or disaster in a
4 border county.

5 Sec. 161.706. FUNDING. (a) The department shall
6 coordinate with the commission, the office of the governor, the
7 federal government, and any other appropriate entity for funding to
8 support the response team's activities.

9 (b) The department may accept on behalf of the response team
10 a gift, grant, or donation from any source to carry out the purposes
11 of this subchapter.

12 SECTION 2. Not later than December 1, 2021, the Department
13 of State Health Services shall establish the border public health
14 response team as required by Subchapter X, Chapter 161, Health and
15 Safety Code, as added by this Act.

16 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2021.