

By: Thierry

H.B. No. 2685

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to a pilot program to provide Medicaid coverage for doula services.

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

SECTION 1. Subchapter B, Chapter 531, Government Code, is amended by adding Section 531.0997 to read as follows:

Sec. 531.0997. MEDICAID PILOT PROGRAM FOR DOULA SERVICES.

(a) In this section:

(1) "Doula" means a nonmedical birthing coach who provides doula services.

(2) "Doula services" means childbirth education and support services, including emotional and physical support provided during pregnancy, labor, delivery, and the postpartum period, or provided intermittently during pregnancy and the postpartum period.

(b) To reduce maternal mortality rates and racial disparities in health outcomes, the commission shall establish a pilot program to provide doula services to Medicaid recipients, regardless of whether those recipients receive services through a Medicaid managed care or fee-for-service delivery model.

(c) The commission shall implement the pilot program in the following phases and geographic areas of this state:

(1) beginning not later than September 1, 2022, the commission shall implement the pilot program in the most populous

1 county in this state; and

2 (2) beginning not later than September 1, 2023, the
3 commission shall implement the pilot program in the county with the
4 greatest maternal health support needs, as determined by the
5 county's maternal and infant mortality rates and the number of
6 births in the county by Medicaid recipients during a period in which
7 provider capacity for the county has been reached.

8 (d) The commission shall prescribe eligibility requirements
9 for participation in the pilot program.

10 (e) The commission shall ensure that Medicaid
11 reimbursement is provided to a doula who provides doula services to
12 an eligible participant under the pilot program for the following:

13 (1) up to four prenatal visits;

14 (2) the provision of support services during labor and
15 delivery; and

16 (3) up to four postpartum visits.

17 (f) Not later than September 1, 2028, the commission shall
18 prepare and submit to the legislature a written report that:

19 (1) summarizes the results of the pilot program,
20 including the effectiveness of the pilot program in reducing
21 maternal mortality rates and racial disparities in health outcomes
22 in the geographic areas of this state in which the pilot program
23 operates;

24 (2) includes feedback from participating doulas and
25 recipients who received doula services under the pilot program; and

26 (3) includes a recommendation on whether the pilot
27 program should be continued, expanded, or terminated.

1 (g) The executive commissioner shall adopt rules to
2 implement this section, including rules outlining the
3 qualifications necessary for an individual to participate in the
4 pilot program as a doula and the scope of doula services to be
5 provided under the pilot program.

6 (h) The pilot program terminates and this section expires
7 September 1, 2030.

8 SECTION 2. If before implementing any provision of this Act
9 a state agency determines that a waiver or authorization from a
10 federal agency is necessary for implementation of that provision,
11 the agency affected by the provision shall request the waiver or
12 authorization and may delay implementing that provision until the
13 waiver or authorization is granted.

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