

By: Hancock, Whitmire

S.B. No. 999

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

1  
2 relating to county and municipal authority and a study regarding  
3 certain medical and health care billing by ambulance service  
4 providers.

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

6 SECTION 1. Section 113.902(a), Local Government Code, is  
7 amended to read as follows:

8 (a) Except as provided by Section 140.013, the [The] county  
9 treasurer shall direct prosecution for the recovery of any debt  
10 owed to the county, as provided by law, and shall supervise the  
11 collection of the debt.

12 SECTION 2. Chapter 140, Local Government Code, is amended  
13 by adding Section 140.013 to read as follows:

14 Sec. 140.013. BALANCE BILLING FOR COUNTY AND MUNICIPAL  
15 AMBULANCE SERVICES. (a) "Balance billing" means the practice of  
16 charging an enrollee in a health benefit plan to recover from the  
17 enrollee the balance of a health care provider's fee for a service  
18 received by the enrollee from the health care provider that is not  
19 fully reimbursed by the enrollee's health benefit plan.

20 (b) A county or municipality may elect to consider a health  
21 benefit plan payment towards a claim for air or ground ambulance  
22 services provided by the county or municipality as payment in full  
23 for those services regardless of the amount the county or  
24 municipality charged for those services.

1        (c) A county or municipality may not practice balance  
2 billing for a claim for which the county or municipality makes an  
3 election under Subsection (b).

4        SECTION 3. (a) In this section, "department" means the  
5 Texas Department of Insurance.

6        (b) The department shall conduct a study on the balance  
7 billing practices of county and municipal ground ambulance service  
8 providers and the variations in prices for county and municipal  
9 ground ambulance services.

10       (c) Not later than December 1, 2022, the department shall  
11 provide a written report of the results of the study conducted under  
12 Subsection (b) of this section to the governor, lieutenant  
13 governor, speaker of the house of representatives, and members of  
14 the standing committees of the legislature with primary  
15 jurisdiction over the department.

16       (d) This section expires September 1, 2023.

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