

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

H.B. 989  
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Higher Education  
Committee Report (Unamended)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

Human papillomavirus (HPV) is one of the most common sexually transmitted infections in the country. According to the National Cancer Institute, the vast majority of people contract HPV within the first few years of sexual activity. Additionally, the CDC states that HPV is a major cause of cancer, most notably cervical and throat cancers. However, according to a 2019 article "Parental knowledge gaps and barriers for children receiving human papillomavirus vaccine in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas," published in *Human Vaccines & Immunotherapeutics*, Texas ranks 47th out of all 50 states in terms of HPV immunization. It is recommended that a child be vaccinated against HPV around the age of eleven or twelve, before sexual activity typically begins. However, according to a brief from The University of Texas System Office of Health Affairs, "Missed Opportunity: Human Papillomavirus Vaccination in Texas," 49.3 percent of Texas adolescents ages 13-17 years old had received at least one HPV vaccine and only around one-third were up to date on HPV vaccinations. This increases the risk of cervical, vaginal, throat, and other cancers caused by HPV. H.B. 989 proposes a strategic prevention plan that would facilitate coordination between state resources and institutions of higher education to provide vaccines and information to those who were not vaccinated at the recommended age. The legislation aims to lower HPV and cervical cancer rates by providing better access to the HPV vaccine and to regular screenings. The CDC estimates that vaccination can prevent the development of 90 percent of HPV-related cancers, and "catch-up" vaccination is encouraged up to the age of 26. Targeting college students will allow those students to receive the vaccination while they are still in the recommended age group. Additionally, when immunization is combined with regular screenings, HPV prevention is even more effective. By establishing HPV vaccination and screenings in institutions of higher learning, Texas can lower the rates of HPV-related cancers.

### **CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT**

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

### **ANALYSIS**

H.B. 989 amends the Education Code to require the Department of State Health Services (DSHS), using existing resources and programs to the extent possible, to develop a state plan for preventing and treating human papillomavirus (HPV) and the health problems caused by the infection among students enrolled at public institutions of higher education. The bill requires the plan to include strategies for preventing and treating HPV and related health problems in

specific demographic groups that are disproportionately affected by the infection. The bill requires DSHS to seek advice from the following stakeholders in developing the plan:

- the public, including advocates who have been infected with HPV;
- each state agency that provides services to persons infected with HPV or related health problems, including the Health and Human Services Commission and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB);
- any advisory body that addresses issues related to health problems caused by HPV;
- public advocates concerned with issues related to health problems caused by HPV;
- providers of services to persons with health problems caused by HPV; and
- a statewide professional association of physicians.

The bill requires DSHS to review and modify the plan as necessary at least once every five years and authorizes DSHS to update the plan biennially.

H.B. 989 requires the THECB and DSHS to jointly develop a program to heighten awareness and enhance knowledge and understanding of HPV among students enrolled at institutions of higher education, and the program must require the THECB and DSHS to do the following:

- conduct health education, public awareness, and community outreach activities regarding the risk factors for, the value of early detection of, available screening services for, and the options available for the treatment of health problems caused by HPV; and
- post on the THECB's and DSHS's respective websites the options available for the prevention, treatment, and detection of HPV infection and related health problems and information on the risk factors for, method of transmission of, and value of early detection of the infection.

The bill authorizes the THECB and DSHS, using existing resources, to include in the program a study to estimate the current and future impact of health problems caused by HPV on Texas.

#### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

September 1, 2023.