

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

C.S.H.B. 2481  
By: Garcia  
Youth Health & Safety, Select  
Committee Report (Substituted)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

Finding adequate placement to meet the needs of a child in state conservatorship can be difficult. Certain times, children are placed in locations distant from their home or are left without placement altogether. Many of these children have greater needs than the general public based on their mental and behavioral health and many placements do not have access to resources to provide the necessary support. C.S.H.B. 2481 seeks to address this issue and increase the likelihood of success in a familial placement by requiring the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) to facilitate access to a counseling and crisis management program to provide mental and behavioral telehealth services and mobile mental and behavioral health intervention services available 24 hours a day to relative or other designated caregivers and children in DFPS conservatorship.

### **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 rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the commissioner of the Department of Family and Protective Services in SECTION 1 of this bill.

### **ANALYSIS**

C.S.H.B. 2481 amends the Family Code to require the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) to facilitate access to a counseling and crisis management program to provide mental and behavioral telehealth services and mobile mental and behavioral health intervention services that are available 24 hours a day and seven days a week to relative or other designated caregivers and children in DFPS managing conservatorship who are placed with relative or other designated caregivers. The bill requires DFPS to begin providing mental and behavioral telehealth services not later than January 1, 2024, and requires the services to be accessible electronically through the use of a computer or telephone application. The bill requires DFPS to begin providing mobile mental and behavioral health intervention services not later than January 1, 2025, and requires the services to be deployed to the location of the child or caregiver requiring intervention services.

C.S.H.B. 2481 limits who may provide services under the program to a licensed psychologist, a licensed marriage and family therapist, a licensed professional counselor, a licensed clinical social worker, or any similarly qualified mental health professional as established by DFPS rule. The bill requires DFPS, to the extent possible, to seek reimbursement from Medicaid or a health plan that provides health coverage for the services specified by the bill to relative or other designated caregivers and children. The bill authorizes DFPS to contract with an outside vendor

to provide the services and requires the DFPS commissioner to adopt rules necessary to implement the bill's provisions.

**EFFECTIVE DATE**

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2023.

**COMPARISON OF INTRODUCED AND SUBSTITUTE**

While C.S.H.B. 2481 may differ from the introduced in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following summarizes the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

Whereas the introduced required DFPS to develop the program, the substitute requires DFPS only to facilitate access to the program.