S.B. No. 2171

AN ACT

relating to the qualifications of experts in certain health care liability claims.

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

SECTION 1.  Section 74.351(r)(5), Civil Practice and Remedies Code, is amended to read as follows:

(5)  "Expert" means:

(A)  with respect to a person giving opinion testimony regarding whether a physician departed from accepted standards of medical care, an expert qualified to testify under the requirements of Section 74.401;

(B)  with respect to a person giving opinion testimony regarding whether a health care provider departed from accepted standards of health care, an expert qualified to testify under the requirements of Section 74.402;

(C)  with respect to a person giving opinion testimony about the causal relationship between the injury, harm, or damages claimed and the alleged departure from the applicable standard of care in any health care liability claim, a physician who is otherwise qualified to render opinions on such causal relationship under the Texas Rules of Evidence;

(D)  with respect to a person giving opinion testimony about the causal relationship between the injury, harm, or damages claimed and the alleged departure from the applicable standard of care for a dentist, a dentist or physician who is otherwise qualified to render opinions on such causal relationship under the Texas Rules of Evidence; [~~or~~]

(E)  with respect to a person giving opinion testimony about the causal relationship between the injury, harm, or damages claimed and the alleged departure from the applicable standard of care for a podiatrist, a podiatrist or physician who is otherwise qualified to render opinions on such causal relationship under the Texas Rules of Evidence; or

(F)  with respect to a person giving opinion testimony about the causal relationship between the injury, harm, or damages claimed and the alleged departure from the applicable standard of care for a chiropractor, a chiropractor or physician who is otherwise qualified to render opinions on such causal relationship under the Texas Rules of Evidence.

SECTION 2.  Section 74.403, Civil Practice and Remedies Code, is amended by amending Subsection (a) and adding Subsection (c-1) to read as follows:

(a)  Except as provided by Subsections (b), [~~and~~] (c), and (c-1), in a suit involving a health care liability claim against a physician or health care provider, a person may qualify as an expert witness on the issue of the causal relationship between the alleged departure from accepted standards of care and the injury, harm, or damages claimed only if the person is a physician and is otherwise qualified to render opinions on that causal relationship under the Texas Rules of Evidence.

(c-1)  In a suit involving a health care liability claim against a chiropractor, a person may qualify as an expert witness on the issue of the causal relationship between the alleged departure from accepted standards of care and the injury, harm, or damages claimed if the person is a chiropractor or physician and is otherwise qualified to render opinions on that causal relationship under the Texas Rules of Evidence.

SECTION 3.  The changes in law made by this Act apply only to an action commenced on or after the effective date of this Act. An action commenced before the effective date of this Act is governed by the law as it existed immediately before the effective date of this Act, and that law is continued in effect for that purpose.

SECTION 4.  This Act takes effect September 1, 2023.

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I hereby certify that S.B. No. 2171 passed the Senate on April 24, 2023, by the following vote:  Yeas 29, Nays 1.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_    Secretary of the Senate

I hereby certify that S.B. No. 2171 passed the House on May 4, 2023, by the following vote:  Yeas 145, Nays 0, one present not voting.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_    Chief Clerk of the House

Approved:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_             Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_           Governor