By:  Menéndez S.B. No. 2223

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to establishing pilot program to offer assistance for older adults diagnosed with severe vision loss.

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

SECTION 1. Sec. 117.080, Human Resources Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a)  The department shall ensure that all services provided under the independent living services program that the department operates under Title VII of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. Section 796 et seq.) are directly provided by centers for independent living, except as provided by Subsection (b), and are not directly provided by the department.

(b)  If an area of the state does not have a center for independent living, or no center for independent living in that area is able to provide certain necessary services under the independent living services program, the department shall seek to identify a center for independent living that is willing and able to contract with a nonprofit organization or other person to provide the independent living services in the area under the program. If no center for independent living is willing and able to contract with another organization or other person, the department may directly contract with an organization or other person who is not a center for independent living to provide the independent living services in the area under the program.

(c)  The department shall evaluate the independent living services provided by a center for independent living and shall provide necessary training or technical assistance to help the center for independent living expand its capacity to provide a full range of independent living services.

(1)  In the department review, the department shall establish major cities who have the ability to offer day-time classes teaching independent living skills. These major cities may establish a pilot program to conduct these classes for older adults diagnosed with severe vision loss.

(d)  The department shall monitor the performance of each center for independent living in providing independent living services, including how the center for independent living monitors the performance of the organizations and other persons with whom it contracts to provide independent living services.

(e)  The executive commissioner shall adopt rules to implement this section that include:

(1)  an equitable and transparent methodology for allocating funds to centers for independent living under the independent living services program;

(2)  requirements applicable to the department in contracting with centers for independent living to provide independent living services under the program;

(3)  requirements applicable to centers for independent living in contracting with organizations and other persons to provide independent living services under the program;

(4)  requirements applicable to the department in contracting with organizations or other persons who are not centers for independent living to provide independent living services under the program;

(5)  a process for the department to monitor independent living services contracts;

(6)  guidelines on the department's role in providing technical assistance and training to centers for independent living as necessary; and

(7)  expectations for department employees to refer persons who contact the department seeking independent living services to centers for independent living.

SECTION 2.  This act takes effect September 1, 2023.