

By: Thierry

H.B. No. 472

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the creation of the office of health equity within the Health and Human Services Commission.

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

SECTION 1. Subtitle E, Title 2, Health and Safety Code, is amended by adding Chapter 107B to read as follows:

CHAPTER 107B. OFFICE OF HEALTH EQUITY

Sec. 107B.001. DEFINITION. In this chapter, "office" means the office of health equity established under this chapter.

Sec. 107B.002. OFFICE OF HEALTH EQUITY. (a) The executive commissioner shall maintain an office of health equity within the commission to:

(1) assume a leadership role in collaborating or contracting with state and federal agencies, universities, private interest groups, communities, foundations, and offices of minority health in the development of health initiatives to decrease or eliminate health and health access disparities and improve health equity across the state, including rural and urban communities, regardless of a person's race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status; and

(2) maximize use of existing resources without duplicating existing efforts.

(b) The health initiatives developed under Subsection (a) must include initiatives to increase access to appropriate language

1 services in health care settings.

2 Sec. 107B.003. POWERS OF OFFICE. The office may:

3 (1) provide a central information and referral source,
4 including a clearinghouse for health disparities information, and
5 serve as the primary state resource in coordinating, planning, and
6 advocating access to health care services to eliminate health
7 disparities in this state;

8 (2) coordinate conferences and other training
9 opportunities to increase skills among state agencies and
10 government personnel in management and in the appreciation of
11 cultural diversity;

12 (3) pursue and administer grant funds for innovative
13 projects for communities, groups, and individuals;

14 (4) provide recommendations and training in improving
15 minority recruitment in state agencies;

16 (5) publicize information regarding health
17 disparities and minority health issues through the use of mass
18 media;

19 (6) network with existing minority organizations,
20 community-based health groups, and statewide health coalitions;

21 (7) solicit, receive, and spend grants, gifts, and
22 donations from public and private sources; and

23 (8) contract with public and private entities in the
24 performance of its responsibilities.

25 Sec. 107B.004. FUNDING. The commission may use existing
26 resources and solicit and accept gifts, grants, and donations from
27 any source to carry out the office's powers and perform the office's

1 duties.

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