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H.B. No. 2171

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT  
2 relating to the establishment of the Texas Center for Rural Health  
3 Education at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley.

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

5 SECTION 1. Chapter 79, Education Code, is amended by adding  
6 Section 79.11 to read as follows:

7 Sec. 79.11. TEXAS CENTER FOR RURAL HEALTH EDUCATION. (a)  
8 In this section, "center" means the Texas Center for Rural Health  
9 Education.

10 (b) The board shall establish the Texas Center for Rural  
11 Health Education at the university.

12 (c) The organization, control, and management of the center  
13 are vested in the board.

14 (d) The center shall:

15 (1) perform an initial assessment of rural health  
16 education in this state;

17 (2) develop appropriate performance metrics to  
18 measure improvement in rural health education and health care  
19 outcomes;

20 (3) conduct research regarding rural health  
21 education, including research to identify:

22 (A) best practices in rural health education; and

23 (B) underserved rural areas;

24 (4) develop recommendations regarding the allocation

1 of funding for tuition and loan repayment programs available to  
2 rural health care professionals;

3 (5) develop partnerships between high schools,  
4 postsecondary institutions of higher education, and local medical  
5 systems to recruit, train, and retain health care professionals to  
6 serve in underserved rural areas;

7 (6) develop a plan to improve rural health education  
8 and health care outcomes; and

9 (7) develop and maintain an Internet website that  
10 provides information regarding rural health education research and  
11 resources.

12 (e) Not later than December 1 of each even-numbered year,  
13 the center shall submit to the legislature a report on rural health  
14 education and health care outcomes in this state. The report must  
15 include a summary of the center's activities under Subsection (d)  
16 and any recommendations for legislative or other action.

17 (f) The university shall encourage public or private  
18 entities to participate in or support the operation of the center  
19 and may enter into an agreement with any public or private entity  
20 for that purpose. An agreement may allow the center to provide  
21 information, services, or other assistance to an entity in exchange  
22 for the entity's participation or support.

23 (g) The board may solicit, accept, and administer gifts and  
24 grants from any public or private source for the purposes of the  
25 center.

26 (h) The board may employ personnel for the center as  
27 necessary.

1        (i) The board may adopt rules as necessary to implement this  
2 section.

3        SECTION 2. Not later than December 1, 2024, the Texas Center  
4 for Rural Health Education shall submit to the legislature the  
5 first biennial report required under Section 79.11, Education Code,  
6 as added by this Act.

7        SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2023.