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| BILL ANALYSIS |

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| H.B. 742 |
| By: Thompson |
| Public Health |
| Committee Report (Unamended) |

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| **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**  The bill author informed the committee that first responders may be the only personnel to encounter a human trafficking victim after an emergency, act of violence, or other adverse experience, as such victims may decline transit to a healthcare facility or any other further intervention due to fear or coercion. While certain medical professionals are trained on the signs of human trafficking in accordance with current law, trafficking victims who fear or are controlled by their trafficker may never come into contact with these professionals. H.B. 742 seeks to combat human trafficking and ensure that first responders, including fire protection personnel and emergency medical services personnel, are able to identify and report human trafficking to the appropriate authorities by requiring such individuals to complete a training course on identifying, assisting, and reporting victims of human trafficking; by requiring hospital emergency departments to display signs regarding the requisite training; and by prohibiting hospitals from retaliating against an employee who reports suspected trafficking in good faith. |
| **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 executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission in SECTION 1 of this bill. |
| **ANALYSIS**  H.B. 742 amends the Health and Safety Code to require a first responder, within the time prescribed by Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) rule, to successfully complete a training course approved by the executive commissioner of HHSC on identifying, assisting, and reporting victims of human trafficking. The bill requires the executive commissioner to do the following:   * approve training courses on human trafficking prevention, including at least one course available without charge; * post a list of the approved training courses on the HHSC website and update the list as necessary; and * consider for approval training courses conducted by health care facilities.   The bill requires the executive commissioner, as soon as practicable after the bill's effective date, to approve and post on the HHSC website the list of approved human trafficking prevention training courses and to adopt rules necessary to implement the bill's provisions relating to human trafficking prevention training.  H.B. 742 defines, for purposes of those bill provisions, "first responder" as a public safety employee whose duties include responding rapidly to an emergency. The term includes fire protection personnel and emergency medical services personnel, as those terms are defined by applicable state law, but does not include volunteer emergency services personnel, an emergency medical services volunteer, or a peace officer or reserve law enforcement officer, as those terms are defined by applicable state law, who is performing law enforcement duties.  H.B. 742 removes a requirement for an emergency department of a hospital to display separate signs in English and Spanish that comply with human trafficking sign requirements for an abortion facility and requires an emergency department and a freestanding emergency medical care facility to display a human trafficking sign in the form prescribed by the attorney general. The bill sets out the size, font, and contents of the sign and requires the sign to be posted in a location easily visible to all hospital or facility employees and separately in English, Spanish, and any other primary language spoken by 10 percent or more of the hospital's or facility's employees, as applicable. The bill requires the attorney general to design the sign as soon as practicable after the bill's effective date.  H.B. 742 prohibits a hospital or a freestanding emergency medical care facility from disciplining, retaliating against, or otherwise discriminating against a hospital or facility employee, as applicable, who in good faith reports a suspected act of human trafficking to the hospital or the facility, a law enforcement agency, the National Human Trafficking Resource Center, the attorney general, or any other appropriate authority. |
| **EFFECTIVE DATE**  September 1, 2025. |