|  |
| --- |
| BILL ANALYSIS |

|  |
| --- |
| H.B. 754 |
| By: Thompson |
| Public Health |
| Committee Report (Unamended) |

|  |
| --- |
| **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE** The bill author has informed the committee that medical assistants are health care professionals who often have much longer to establish rapport and trust with patients, as these professionals are responsible for critical tasks such as obtaining vital signs and medical history. According to witness testimony provided to the House Committee on Public Health by the Texas Society of Medical Assistants, medical assistants often work in both front and back operations and play a critical role in identifying signs of human trafficking, as they can observe the interactions and behavioral dynamics between the victim and the person who accompanies them. However, current law does not require medical assistants to be trained to identify and report human trafficking. H.B. 754 seeks to combat human trafficking by requiring medical assistants to complete a training course on identifying, assisting, and reporting victims of human trafficking; by requiring health facilities to display signs regarding the requisite training; and by prohibiting health facility employers 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 2 of this bill. |
| **ANALYSIS** H.B. 754 amends the Health and Safety Code to require a medical assistant, 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 courses on the HHSC website and update the list as necessary; and
* consider for approval training courses conducted by health care facilities.

As soon as practicable after the bill's effective date, the executive commissioner must approve and post on the HHSC website the list of approved human trafficking prevention training courses and adopt rules necessary to implement the bill's provisions regarding such training. For purposes of these bill provisions, the bill defines "medical assistant" as an individual who, under the supervision of a physician, assists with patient care management, executes administrative duties, and performs clinical procedures, including conducting aseptic procedures, obtaining vital signs, preparing patients for the physician's care, performing venipunctures and non‑intravenous injections, observing and reporting patients' symptoms, administering basic first aid, assisting with patient examinations or treatments, operating office medical equipment, collecting routine laboratory specimens as directed by the physician, administering medication as directed by the physician, performing basic laboratory procedures, and performing dialysis procedures, including home dialysis.H.B. 754 prohibits a facility, defined by reference as including a hospital, ambulatory surgical center, public health clinic, birthing center, outpatient clinic, and community health center, from disciplining, retaliating against, or otherwise discriminating against a facility employee who in good faith reports a suspected act of human trafficking to the facility, a law enforcement agency, the National Human Trafficking Resource Center, the attorney general, or another appropriate authority. Moreover, the bill requires an applicable 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 facility employees and separately in English, Spanish, and any other primary language spoken by 10 percent or more of the facility's employees, as applicable. The attorney general must design the sign as soon as practicable after the bill's effective date. |
| **EFFECTIVE DATE** September 1, 2025. |