

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 514
By: Lalani
Public Health
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The bill author has informed the committee that Texas faces significant challenges regarding access to maternity care, particularly in rural areas and communities of color. According to the March of Dimes, over 15,000 babies are born in maternity care deserts in Texas, and 28.4 percent of women in rural areas live over 30 minutes from a birthing hospital, higher than the national average. The bill author has informed the committee that the farther a woman travels to receive maternity care, the greater the risk of maternal morbidity and adverse infant outcomes, such as stillbirth and NICU admission. H.B. 514 seeks to address this pressing issue by creating a maternal health care workforce public outreach campaign aimed at increasing the number of trained maternal health professionals across Texas, especially in rural and underserved areas.

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. 514 amends the Health and Safety Code to require the Department of State Health Services (DSHS), using available resources, to develop and implement a public outreach campaign to increase the number of maternal health care professionals in Texas' health care workforce to improve access to maternal health care in rural areas of Texas and other areas with a shortage of maternal health care professionals. The bill requires DSHS to design the campaign to do the following:

- prioritize continuing education for maternal health care professionals;
- facilitate the implementation of training programs to:
 - provide trauma-informed care training for all maternal health care professionals;
 - increase the number of maternal health care professionals in rural areas of Texas and other areas with a shortage of maternal health care professionals; and
 - increase the number in the maternal health care workforce of health care professionals who are members of racial or ethnic minority groups;
- increase the overall capacity of the maternal health care workforce in Texas, including by investing in equipment and locations to provide maternal health care; and
- facilitate the implementation of maternal health care programs to improve access to maternal health care and provide services to women of underserved racial or ethnic minority groups.

The bill requires the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission to adopt rules necessary to implement the bill's provisions as soon as practicable after the bill's

effective date and defines "maternal health care professional" as a professional who is certified or licensed in Texas to provide maternal health care, including a doula and an individual who provides nonmedical support during pregnancy, labor, delivery, and the postpartum period.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2025.