

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 2655
By: Oliverson
Intergovernmental Affairs
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

In 2007, the 80th Texas Legislature enacted legislation that allowed local entities to establish health care programs for small employers, known as three-share premium assistance programs, which use state funds to subsidize premiums for low-income employees of small businesses. Three-share programs are not regulated as insurance companies by the Texas Department of Insurance (TDI), and county commissioners courts are authorized to establish, participate in, and directly govern these programs under current state law. The bill author has informed the committee that TexHealth Central Texas is a premium assistance program that does not provide direct health insurance coverage but instead offers subsidies to help individuals afford licensed commercial health insurance. The bill author has also informed the committee that premium assistance programs pose lower risk than three-share programs and remain under TDI's direct oversight through grant management, which includes monthly reporting and a biennial application process. H.B. 2655 seeks to allow TexHealth Central Texas to operate statewide and continue to reduce the number of uninsured Texans by authorizing a community-based nonprofit organization to establish or participate in a regional health care program for employees of small employers without the participation of the commissioners court of a county if the program is a premium assistance program not offering health care services or health care benefits.

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 this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

H.B. 2655 amends the Health and Safety Code to authorize a community-based nonprofit organization to establish or participate in a regional health care program for employees of small employers without the participation of the commissioners court of a county if the program is a premium assistance program not offering health care services or health care benefits. The bill provides for a participating nonprofit organization to operate and directly govern such a program and subjects such a program to the program objectives established under state law for other regional or local health programs but with respect to serving individuals in a county in which a participating nonprofit organization operates.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2025.