

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 25
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AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The U.S. spends \$4.5 trillion annually on healthcare, with 90% of healthcare expenditures on chronic and mental health conditions. The food industry grosses \$1.46 trillion annually, of which 45% is gross profit.

Despite exorbitant healthcare spending, American health is rapidly declining, as seen by key measures: a 79% increase in early-onset (under 50 years of age) cancers. Ten of the seventeen cancers whose rates increased were related to excess body weight. Obesity now affects 20% of children and 42% of adults. Type 1 diabetes has nearly doubled in the past 40 years. Although obesity is linked heavily to chronic illness, American diets are often overlooked. Instead, drug companies bring drugs to market to treat obesity by suppressing hunger signals, as opposed to addressing the root cause.

Recent studies show the link between an increased ultra-processed foods diet and an increased risk of early mortality. Ultra-processed food makes up 73% of the U.S. food supply. The American daily diet consists of a 57% consumption of ultra-processed foods, which is shown to link to depression, obesity, Type 2 diabetes, cancer, and cardiovascular disease. On average, ultra-processed foods are 52% cheaper than minimally processed alternatives.

The U.S. is 4% of the total world population and produces at least 64% of the world's pharma profits, yet we rank 60th in the world for life expectancy. The healthcare industry has ignored the issues related to chronic disease and instead focuses on using the medical profession to prescribe medication and increase profits.

Understanding the root causes of increased chronic diseases is of growing significance to policymakers. Changes in diet and the role of ultra-processed foods in chronic health conditions are possible contributing factors to the trends outlined above.

S.B. 25 seeks to remedy this by addressing chronic disease through nutrition education, enhanced physical activity requirements, and examining who controls our food system.

As proposed, S.B. 25 amends current law relating to health and nutrition standards to promote healthy living.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission in SECTION 6 (Section 119B.008, Health and Safety Code) of this bill.

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Medical Board in SECTION 8 (Section 156.061, Occupations Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 28.002, Education Code, by amending Subsection (1) and adding Subsection (1-4), as follows:

(1) Requires a school district to require students enrolled in grade levels six, seven, and eight to participate in moderate or vigorous daily physical activity for at least 30 minutes for at least six, rather than four, semesters during those grade levels as part of the district's physical education curriculum.

(1-4) Prohibits a school employee, in providing a physical education curriculum under Subsection (1), from restricting participation in recess or other physical activity offered as part of the district's physical education curriculum for a student enrolled in kindergarten or in a grade level below grade six as a penalty for the student's academic performance or behavior, or physical activity offered as part of the district's physical education curriculum for a student enrolled in grade level six, seven, or eight as a penalty for the student's academic performance or behavior.

SECTION 2. Amends Subchapter A, Chapter 63, Education Code, by adding Section 63.0025, as follows:

Sec. 63.0025. **REQUIRED NUTRITION CURRICULUM.** Provides that a health-related institution of higher education listed in Section 63.002(c) (relating to authorizing the amount available for distribution from the permanent health fund for higher education to be appropriated only for certain programs at certain institutions of higher education) is eligible for distribution of money under Subchapter A (Permanent Health Fund for Higher Education) only if the institution:

- (1) develops nutrition curriculum requirements based on nutrition guidelines recommended by the Texas Nutrition Advisory Committee (advisory committee) established under Chapter 119B, Health and Safety Code; and
- (2) requires all medical students or students in other health-related majors who are enrolled at the institution to successfully complete the curriculum requirements developed under Subdivision (1).

SECTION 3. Amends Subchapter B, Chapter 63, Education Code, by adding Section 63.103, as follows:

Sec. 63.103. **REQUIRED NUTRITION CURRICULUM.** Provides that a health-related institution of higher education listed in Section 63.101(a) (relating to providing that a separate permanent endowment fund is established for the benefit of each of certain institutions of higher education) is eligible for distribution of money from a fund established under Subchapter B (Permanent Funds for Health-Related Institutions) only if the institution:

- (1) develops nutrition curriculum requirements based on nutrition guidelines recommended by the advisory committee established under Chapter 119B, Health and Safety Code; and
- (2) requires all medical students or students in other health-related majors who are enrolled at the institution to successfully complete the curriculum requirements developed under Subdivision (1).

SECTION 4. Amends Subchapter C, Chapter 63, Education Code, by adding Section 63.2025, as follows:

Sec. 63.2025. **REQUIRED NUTRITION CURRICULUM.** Provides that a health-related institution providing graduate medical education is eligible for a grant award under Subchapter C (Permanent Fund for Higher Education Nursing, Allied Health, and Other Health-Related Programs) if the institution:

- (1) develops nutrition curriculum requirements based on nutrition guidelines recommended by the advisory committee established under Chapter 119B, Health and Safety Code; and

(2) requires all students in nursing, allied health, or other health-related majors who are enrolled at the institution to successfully complete the curriculum requirements developed under Subdivision (1).

SECTION 5. Amends Subchapter D, Chapter 63, Education Code, by adding Section 63.303, as follows:

Sec. 63.303. **REQUIRED NUTRITION CURRICULUM.** Provides that a health-related institution providing graduate medical education is eligible for a grant award under Subchapter D (Permanent Fund for Minority Health Research and Education) only if the institution:

(1) develops nutrition curriculum requirements based on nutrition guidelines recommended by the advisory committee established under Chapter 119B, Health and Safety Code; and

(2) requires all medical students or students in other health-related majors who are enrolled at the institution to successfully complete the curriculum requirements developed under Subdivision (1).

SECTION 6. Amends Subtitle E, Title 2, Health and Safety Code, by adding Chapter 119B, as follows:

CHAPTER 119B. TEXAS NUTRITION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Sec. 119B.001. **DEFINITION.** Defines "advisory committee."

Sec. 119B.002. **ADVISORY COMMITTEE ESTABLISHED.** Provides that the advisory committee is established to develop nutritional guidelines for residents of this state. Provides that the advisory committee is administratively attached to the Department of State Health Services (DSHS).

Sec. 119B.003. **MEMBERSHIP.** (a) Provides that the advisory committee is composed of seven members appointed by the governor, including certain professionals and representatives.

(b) Requires the governor, in appointing the advisory committee members, to consider recommendations provided by the chair of the senate committee on health and human services, the chair of the house of representatives committee on public health, and the chair of the house of representatives committee on human services, and ensure not more than two members are affiliated with an academic or health-related institution of higher education if the appointment could reasonably create a conflict of interest between the goals of the advisory committee and the goals of the institution.

(c) Prohibits the governor from appointing as an advisory committee member an individual who owns or controls a three percent or greater ownership interest in a food, beverage, or pharmaceutical manufacturing company or is related within the third degree of consanguinity or affinity, as determined by Chapter 573 (Degrees of Relationship; Nepotism Prohibitions), Government Code, to an individual who owns or controls a three percent or greater ownership interest in a food, beverage, or pharmaceutical manufacturing company.

(d) Requires an individual, before accepting an appointment under this section, to disclose all past or existing affiliations with a food, beverage, or pharmaceutical manufacturing company or any other affiliation that could reasonably create a conflict of interest with the goals of the advisory committee. Provides that an advisory committee member who fails to disclose an affiliation described by this subsection is subject to removal by the governor.

(e) Provides that advisory committee members serve staggered two-year terms.

Sec. 119B.004. **ADVISORY COMMITTEE DUTIES.** Requires the advisory committee to:

- (1) examine the impact of nutrition on human health and examine the connection between ultra-processed foods, including foods containing artificial color and food additives, and the prevalence of chronic diseases and other chronic health issues;
- (2) provide an independent review of scientific studies analyzing the effects of ultra-processed foods on human health;
- (3) provide education on the effects of ultra-processed foods on human health; and
- (4) develop and maintain dietary and nutritional guidelines based on the consensus of available scientific studies and information concerning diet and nutrition.

Sec. 119B.005. **ANNUAL REPORT.** Requires the advisory committee, not later than September 1 of each year, to prepare and submit to DSHS, the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, and each standing committee of the legislature with primary jurisdiction over health and safety a written report that includes a summary of the scientific studies, nutritional guidelines incorporating any new scientific findings, and any other recommendations the advisory committee considers appropriate based on new scientific studies.

Sec. 119B.006. **DEPARTMENT NUTRITIONAL GUIDELINES WEBPAGE.** (a) Requires DSHS to post on a publicly available webpage on DSHS's Internet website the guidelines developed under Section 119B.004 in a manner that is easily accessible and readily understandable.

(b) Requires DSHS to annually update information posted under this section based on the report submitted under Section 119B.005.

Sec. 119B.007. **EXPIRATION.** Provides that the advisory committee is abolished and this chapter expires December 31, 2032.

Sec. 119B.008. **RULES.** Authorizes the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to adopt rules as necessary to implement this chapter.

SECTION 7. Amends Subchapter D, Chapter 431, Health and Safety Code, by adding Section 431.0815, as follows:

Sec. 431.0815. **FOOD CONTAINING ARTIFICIAL COLOR, ADDITIVES, OR CERTAIN BANNED CHEMICALS.** (a) Requires a food manufacturer to label each product the manufacturer offers for sale with a warning label disclosing the use of any artificial color, food additive, or other chemical ingredient banned by Canada, the European Union, or the United Kingdom.

(b) Requires that the warning label include at least one of certain statements, be placed in a prominent and reasonably visible location, and have sufficiently high contrast with the immediate background to ensure the warning is likely to be seen and understood by the ordinary individual under customary conditions of purchase and use.

(c) Requires a food manufacturer that offers a product described by Subsection (a) for sale on the manufacturer's Internet website to disclose to the consumer all labeling information required under Subsection (b) and DSHS rules by posting a legible statement on the manufacturer's Internet website or otherwise communicating the information to the consumer.

SECTION 8. Amends Subchapter B, Chapter 156, Occupations Code, by adding Section 156.061, as follows:

Sec. 156.061. CONTINUING EDUCATION IN NUTRITION AND METABOLIC HEALTH. (a) Requires a physician licensed under Subtitle B (Physicians) who submits an application for renewal of a license to practice medicine to complete, in accordance with this section and rules adopted under this section, continuing medical education regarding nutrition and metabolic health.

(b) Requires the Texas Medical Board (TMB) to adopt rules to implement this section. Requires that the rules prescribe the number of hours of the continuing medical education required by this section and the content of the continuing medical education required by this section by using the nutritional guidelines provided by the advisory committee under Chapter 119B, Health and Safety Code.

SECTION 9. (a) Provides that Section 28.002(1), Education Code, as amended by this Act, applies only to students entering the sixth grade during the 2026–2027 school year or a later school year. Provides that, for students entering a grade above sixth grade during the 2026–2027 school year, Section 28.002(1), Education Code, as that section existed before amendment by this Act, applies, and that section is continued in effect for that purpose.

(b) Provides that Section 28.002(1-4), Education Code, as added by this Act, applies beginning with the 2026–2027 school year.

SECTION 10. (a) Requires a health-related institution of higher education, not later than July 1, 2027, to develop and implement curriculum required by Sections 63.0025, 63.103, 63.2025, and 63.303, Education Code, as added by this Act, to remain eligible for funding under those sections.

(b) Provides that a health-related institution of higher education is not required to comply with Sections 63.0025, 63.103, 63.2025, and 63.303, Education Code, as added by this Act, until July 1, 2027.

SECTION 11. (a) Requires the governor, not later than December 31, 2025, to appoint the members of the advisory committee established under Chapter 119B, Health and Safety Code, as added by this Act, and to provide for staggered member terms as required by that chapter.

(b) Requires the advisory committee, not later than September 1, 2026, to prepare and submit to DSHS, the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house, and each standing committee of the legislature with primary jurisdiction over health and safety the initial report required under Section 119B.005, Health and Safety Code, as added by this Act.

(c) Requires DSHS, as soon as practicable after the submission of the report under Subsection (b) of this section, to post information required under Section 119B.006, Health and Safety Code, as added by this Act, on DSHS's Internet website.

SECTION 12. (a) Requires the executive commissioner of HHSC, not later than December 31, 2025, to adopt rules to implement changes made by Section 431.0815, Health and Safety Code, as added by this Act.

(b) Makes application of Section 431.0815, Health and Safety Code, as added by this Act, prospective to January 1, 2026.

SECTION 13. (a) Makes application of Section 156.061, Occupations Code, as added by this Act, prospective to January 1, 2027.

(b) Requires TMB, not later than December 31, 2026, to adopt the rules required by Section 156.061, Occupations Code, as added by this Act.

SECTION 14. Effective date: September 1, 2025.