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H.B. No. 3174

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to county and hospital district disease control pilot programs to reduce the risk of certain infectious and communicable diseases; authorizing fees.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. This Act may be cited as the Honorable Ruth Jones McClendon Act.

SECTION 2. (a) The legislature finds drug abuse has been a tragedy for many Texas families, and for individuals addicted to drugs the receipt of education about and treatment for addiction is imperative. Cooperation with community-based and faith-based organizations creates a network of support for Texas families and the opportunity to intervene in drug addiction. Members of community-based and faith-based organizations have a strong desire to compassionately preserve lives and help those stricken with disease and drug addiction.

(b) Allowing the operation of disease control pilot programs will reduce the transmission of blood-borne diseases, including HIV/AIDS, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C, and provide program participants with referrals to appropriate health and social services. A pilot program established under this Act may provide necessary access to primary health care, ensure safe and sterile disposal of used syringes and needles, and protect the public health. Pilot program goals may include reduced rates of

1 intravenous drug use and a reduced number of injuries to innocent  
2 victims, first responders, and law enforcement caused by needle  
3 sticks from improperly disposed needles. Additionally, it is the  
4 intent of the legislature for a pilot program to increase access to  
5 substance abuse treatment services, increase the likelihood of  
6 successful treatments for addiction, and protect the public health  
7 and safety.

8 SECTION 3. Section 526.0056, Government Code, as effective  
9 April 1, 2025, is amended to read as follows:

10 Sec. 526.0056. PILOT PROGRAM TO PREVENT SPREAD OF  
11 INFECTIOUS AND ~~[OR]~~ COMMUNICABLE DISEASES. The commission may  
12 provide guidance to the counties and hospital districts in those  
13 counties that establish ~~[local health authority of Bexar County in~~  
14 ~~establishing]~~ a disease control pilot program under Subchapter K,  
15 Chapter 81, Health and Safety Code, ~~[funded by the county]~~ to  
16 prevent the spread of HIV, hepatitis B, hepatitis C, and other  
17 infectious and communicable diseases. The program may include a  
18 disease control outreach program that provides for the anonymous  
19 exchange of used hypodermic needles and syringes.

20 SECTION 4. Chapter 81, Health and Safety Code, is amended by  
21 adding Subchapter K to read as follows:

22 SUBCHAPTER K. PILOT PROGRAM TO REDUCE RISK OF CERTAIN INFECTIOUS  
23 AND COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

24 Sec. 81.501. APPLICABILITY OF SUBCHAPTER. This subchapter  
25 applies only to Bexar, Dallas, El Paso, Harris, Nueces, Travis, and  
26 Webb Counties and hospital districts in those counties.

27 Sec. 81.502. DISEASE CONTROL PILOT PROGRAM. (a) A county

1 or hospital district may establish a disease control pilot program  
2 under this subchapter to prevent the spread of infectious and  
3 communicable diseases, including HIV, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C.  
4 The pilot program may include disease control outreach programs  
5 that:

6 (1) provide for the anonymous exchange of used  
7 hypodermic needles and syringes for an equal number of new  
8 hypodermic needles and syringes;

9 (2) offer education on the transmission and prevention  
10 of infectious and communicable diseases, including HIV, hepatitis  
11 B, and hepatitis C; and

12 (3) assist program participants in obtaining health  
13 care and other physical and mental health-related services,  
14 including substance abuse treatment services and blood-borne  
15 disease testing.

16 (b) A county or hospital district may register an  
17 organization to operate the disease control pilot program and  
18 distribute hypodermic needles and syringes to control the spread of  
19 certain blood-borne communicable diseases. The county or hospital  
20 district may charge the organization a registration fee in an  
21 amount reasonable and necessary to cover the costs of registration  
22 oversight, including coordination with law enforcement personnel.

23 (c) A registered organization may charge a program  
24 participant a fee for each hypodermic needle or syringe used in the  
25 program not to exceed 150 percent of the actual cost to the  
26 organization of the hypodermic needle or syringe.

27 (d) A registered organization shall annually provide to the

department and the county or hospital district with which the organization is registered information on:

(1) the effectiveness of the disease control pilot program;

(2) the program's impact on reducing the spread of infectious and communicable diseases, including HIV, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C; and

(3) the program's effect on injected drug use by individuals residing within the county or hospital district.

Sec. 81.503. DISTRIBUTION OF NEEDLES AND SYRINGES TO PILOT PROGRAM. A person licensed as a wholesale drug distributor or device distributor under Chapter 431 may distribute hypodermic needles and syringes to a disease control pilot program authorized by this subchapter.

Sec. 81.504. HANDLING OF NEEDLES AND SYRINGES. An organization registered as provided by Section 81.502:

(1) shall store hypodermic needles and syringes in a proper and secure manner and allow only authorized employees or volunteers of the organization's disease control pilot program to access the hypodermic needles and syringes;

(2) may include hypodermic needles and syringes in packaged safe kits made available to program participants through the program;

(3) may provide hypodermic needles, syringes, and safe kits to program participants only through an authorized employee or volunteer of the program; and

(4) shall store and dispose of used hypodermic needles

1 and syringes in accordance with applicable state laws and  
2 administrative rules governing the safe and proper disposal of  
3 medical waste.

4 Sec. 81.505. FUNDING. Except to the extent specifically  
5 prohibited by law, an organization registered to operate a disease  
6 control pilot program as provided by Section 81.502 may solicit or  
7 accept gifts, grants, or donations to fund the program.

8 Sec. 81.506. EXPIRATION. This subchapter expires September  
9 1, 2035.

10 SECTION 5. Section [481.125](#), Health and Safety Code, is  
11 amended by adding Subsections (j), (k), (l), and (m) to read as  
12 follows:

13 (j) Subsections (a) and (b) do not apply to a person who  
14 possesses or delivers a hypodermic needle or syringe for a medical  
15 purpose. For the purposes of this subsection, "medical purpose"  
16 includes the exchange of a hypodermic needle or syringe for a used  
17 hypodermic needle or syringe in a disease control pilot program  
18 described by Subchapter K, Chapter [81](#).

19 (k) Subsections (a) and (b) do not apply to a person who  
20 possesses or manufactures hypodermic needles or syringes for  
21 delivery to a disease control pilot program described by Subchapter  
22 K, Chapter [81](#).

23 (l) Subsections (a) and (b) do not apply to a person who is  
24 an employee, volunteer, duly authorized agent, or program  
25 participant of a disease control pilot program described by  
26 Subchapter K, Chapter [81](#), and uses, possesses, or delivers a  
27 hypodermic needle or syringe as part of the program.

1        (m) This subsection and Subsections (j), (k), and (l) expire  
2        September 1, 2035.

3        SECTION 6. The change to Section [481.125](#), Health and Safety  
4        Code, made by this Act applies only to an offense committed on or  
5        after the effective date of this Act. An offense committed before  
6        the effective date of this Act is governed by the law in effect when  
7        the offense was committed, and the former law is continued in effect  
8        for that purpose. For purposes of this section, an offense is  
9        committed before the effective date of this Act if any element of  
10       the offense occurs before the effective date.

11       SECTION 7. This Act takes effect September 1, 2025.