

- SUBJECT:** Requiring air ambulance companies to enter into reciprocity agreements
- COMMITTEE:** Public Health — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 10 ayes — S. Thompson, Allison, Coleman, Frank, Guerra, Lucio, Ortega, Price, Sheffield, Zedler
- 0 nays
- 1 absent — Wray
- WITNESSES:** For — Blake Hutson, AARP Texas; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Erica Ding, Doctors for Change; Mike Meroney, Texas Association of Health Underwriters)
- Against — None
- BACKGROUND:** Health and Safety Code sec. 773.011 authorizes an emergency medical services provider to create and operate a subscription program to fund and provide emergency medical services. It also exempts subscription programs from regulation under the Texas Insurance Code.
- DIGEST:** HB 463 would require air ambulance companies that operated a subscription program in the state to enter into reciprocity agreements with each other to maximize geographic coverage for patients covered under those programs. The bill would exempt a reciprocity agreement for subscription programs from regulation under the Texas Insurance Code.
- The executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission would adopt rules necessary to implement the bill's provisions as soon as practicable after the effective date.
- The bill would take effect September 1, 2019.
- SUPPORTERS SAY:** By requiring air ambulance companies that operate subscription programs to enter into reciprocity agreements, HB 463 would address gaps in air ambulance services for individuals who participate in these programs.

Subscription programs for air ambulance companies provide speedy transportation to hospitals for members in isolated areas, while limiting costs. Membership in these programs currently does not guarantee a particular service will be available when an emergency occurs, which can lead to charges being incurred for the total cost of transport provided by an air ambulance service provider if a patient does not participate in that provider's subscription program. Establishing reciprocity agreements would ensure patients under subscription programs had access to air ambulance services regardless of where an emergency occurred.

OPPONENTS
SAY:

No concerns identified.