

SUBJECT: Allowing certain providers to receive Medicaid reimbursement

COMMITTEE: Human Services — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 7 ayes — Frank, Rose, Campos, Klick, Manuel, Noble, Ramos
2 nays — Hull, Shaheen

WITNESSES: For — Mikki Hand, Texas Association of Community Health Centers and Frontera Healthcare; Dusty McCoy, John Austin Stokes, West Texas Counseling and Guidance (*Registered, but did not testify*: Adrienne Lloyd, Children's Defense Fund-Texas; Georgia Bates, City of Uvalde; Lindsay Lanagan, Legacy Community Health; Allison Billodeau, Jamie McCormick, Texas Alliance of Child and Family Services; Barry Haenisch, Texas Association of Community Schools; Whitney Broughton, Texas Association of School Boards; Sarah Crockett, Texas CASA; Josette Saxton, Texas Suicide Prevention Council; Ashley Harris, United Ways of Texas)

Against — None

On — Ryan Van Ramshorst, MD, Health and Human Services Commission; Bryan Mares, National Association of Social Workers-Texas; Jan Friese, Texas Counseling Association; Kathy Rider, Texas Society for Clinical Social Work (*Registered, but did not testify*: Hannah Gill, NAMI Texas)

BACKGROUND: Some have suggested that allowing additional health care professionals to receive Medicaid reimbursement for mental health services could help address workforce shortages.

DIGEST: CSHB 1879 would require the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to assure that a Medicaid recipient could select certain providers to perform any health care service or procedure covered by Medicaid if the selected person was licensed and authorized by law to perform the service or procedure. The providers would include:

- a licensed marriage and family therapist associate who was working toward fulfilling the supervised practice requirements to be licensed as a marriage and family therapist;
- a licensed master social worker who was actively pursuing the education and training required to be licensed as a clinical social worker; or
- a licensed professional counselor associate who was working toward fulfilling the supervised practice requirements to be licensed as a professional counselor.

HHSC would be required to provide Medicaid reimbursement to a provider, including a federally qualified health center, for the provision of covered counseling services performed by these individuals. HHSC would reimburse the provider at a rate equal to 70 percent of the reimbursement rate established for a licensed psychiatrist or licensed psychologist for providing similar services.

If a state agency determined that a waiver or authorization from a federal agency was necessary to implement the bill, the agency would be required to request the waiver and could delay implementation until the waiver or authorization was granted.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2023.

NOTES:

According to the Legislative Budget Board, CSHB 1879 would have a negative impact of about \$1.4 million on general revenue related funds for fiscal 2024-25.