

By: Lucio

S.B. No. 1680

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to a task force of border health officials.

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

SECTION 1. Subtitle F, Title 2, Health and Safety Code, is amended by adding Chapter 120 to read as follows:

CHAPTER 120. TASK FORCE OF BORDER HEALTH OFFICIALS

SUBCHAPTER A. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Sec. 120.001. DEFINITIONS. In this chapter:

(1) "Border region" means the Texas-Mexico border region, as defined by Section 2056.002, Government Code.

(2) "Task force" means the Task Force of Border Health Officials.

SUBCHAPTER B. POWERS AND DUTIES

Sec. 120.051. TASK FORCE; DUTIES. (a) The department shall establish the Task Force of Border Health Officials to advise the commissioner:

(1) on policy priorities addressing major issues affecting the border region residents' health and health conditions;

(2) on raising public awareness of the issues described by Subdivision (1); and

(3) on other health issues impacting the border region as determined by the commissioner, including:

(A) barriers to accessing health care;

1 (B) health problems affecting the region,

2 including:

- 3 (i) diabetes;
- 4 (ii) infant mortality;
- 5 (iii) heart disease and stroke;
- 6 (iv) obesity;
- 7 (v) cervical cancer; and
- 8 (vi) communicable diseases, including
- 9 tuberculosis;

10 (C) factors that impede access to health care,

11 including:

- 12 (i) socioeconomic conditions;
- 13 (ii) linguistic and cultural barriers;
- 14 (iii) low population density; and
- 15 (iv) lack of health insurance;

16 (D) providing increased surveillance and  
17 tracking of communicable diseases, environmental factors, and  
18 other factors negatively influencing health;

19 (E) standardization of data to ensure  
20 compatibility with data being collected by border states on both  
21 sides of the Mexican border;

22 (F) public health infrastructure, including  
23 education and research institutions that can train culturally  
24 competent health care providers;

25 (G) establishing local and regional public  
26 health programs that build on local resources and maximize the use  
27 of public dollars to address the needs of the indigent population;

1 and

2 (H) improving collaboration and cooperation with  
3 Mexican counterparts of the task force at the state and federal  
4 level, and collaboration with federal counterparts in the United  
5 States.

6 (b) The task force shall study and make recommendations  
7 relating to the health problems, conditions, challenges, and needs  
8 of the population in the border region.

9 (c) The task force shall submit a report of recommendations  
10 to the commissioner for short-term and long-term border plans, as  
11 described by Subchapter C, not later than November 1 of each  
12 even-numbered year.

13 Sec. 120.052. COLLABORATION WITH THE OFFICE OF BORDER  
14 HEALTH. The Office of Border Health established under Section  
15 12.071 shall provide staff support to the task force and any other  
16 assistance as needed or required by the task force, if practicable.

17 Sec. 120.053. COMPOSITION. (a) The task force is composed  
18 of:

19 (1) the health department directors appointed under  
20 Section 121.033 from:

21 (A) each county in the border region; and

22 (B) each municipality in the border region that  
23 has a sister city in Mexico;

24 (2) two ex officio nonvoting members who are members  
25 of the legislature:

26 (A) one of whom is appointed by the lieutenant  
27 governor; and

1                   (B) one of whom is appointed by the speaker of the  
2 house of representatives; and

3                   (3) additional members appointed by the commissioner.

4                   (b) The commissioner shall designate a chair and vice chair  
5 of the task force from among the task force members.

6                   (c) The members appointed by the lieutenant governor and the  
7 speaker of the house of representatives serve three-year terms.

8                   Sec. 120.054. MEETINGS. (a) The task force shall meet at  
9 least quarterly each fiscal year. Members may hold meetings by  
10 conference calls and through videoconference in accordance with  
11 Section 551.127, Government Code.

12                   (b) Section 551.125, Government Code, applies to a meeting  
13 held by conference call under this section, except that Section  
14 551.125(b), Government Code, does not apply.

15                   Sec. 120.055. COMPENSATION. A task force member is not  
16 entitled to compensation or reimbursement for expenses incurred in  
17 performing the member's duties.

18                   SUBCHAPTER C. BORDER HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PLAN

19                   Sec. 120.101. SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM PLANS. (a) The task  
20 force shall make recommendations to the commissioner for short-term  
21 and long-term border health improvement plans. The short-term plan  
22 shall identify health objectives proposed to be accomplished before  
23 the fourth anniversary of the date the plan is adopted. The  
24 long-term plan shall identify health objectives proposed to be  
25 accomplished before the ninth anniversary of the date the plan is  
26 adopted.

27                   (b) The commissioner shall review the task force's

1 recommendations and, based on those recommendations, recommend  
2 short-term and long-term border health improvement plans to the  
3 executive commissioner, identifying specific health objectives  
4 that may be implemented under existing law.

5 (c) The executive commissioner shall adopt short-term and  
6 long-term border health improvement plans and direct the department  
7 to implement the portions of the plans that can be implemented  
8 within existing appropriations under existing law.

9 (d) Not later than September 1 of each even-numbered year,  
10 the executive commissioner shall submit a report detailing the  
11 actions taken by the task force. The report must include:

12 (1) the status of all projects and activities  
13 involving the health issues described under Section 120.051(a)(3);

14 (2) the funding for the expenditures; and

15 (3) recommendations for legislation necessary to  
16 implement the short-term and long-term border health improvement  
17 plans.

18 Sec. 120.102. APPLICATION OF OTHER LAW. Chapter 2110,  
19 Government Code, does not apply to the task force.

20 Sec. 120.103. ASSISTANCE FROM STATE AGENCIES AND POLITICAL  
21 SUBDIVISIONS. At the request of the task force, a state agency or  
22 political subdivision of this state shall cooperate with the task  
23 force to the greatest extent practicable to fully implement the  
24 task force's statutory duties.

25 SECTION 2. (a) The commissioner of state health services,  
26 lieutenant governor, and speaker of the house of representatives  
27 shall appoint the members of the Task Force of Border Health

1 Officials established by this Act not later than October 1, 2017.

2 (b) The initial short-term border health improvement plan  
3 adopted under Section 120.101, Health and Safety Code, as added by  
4 this Act, must include a border health improvement plan for  
5 implementation beginning not later than September 1, 2018. The  
6 Department of State Health Services shall implement the initiatives  
7 in the short-term border health improvement plan, as directed by  
8 the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services  
9 Commission, not later than September 1, 2022.

10 (c) The initial long-term border health improvement plan  
11 adopted under Section 120.101, Health and Safety Code, as added by  
12 this Act, must include a border health improvement plan for  
13 implementation beginning not later than September 1, 2020. The  
14 Department of State Health Services shall implement the initiatives  
15 in the long-term border health improvement plan, as directed by the  
16 executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission,  
17 not later than September 1, 2027.

18 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives  
19 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as  
20 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this  
21 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this  
22 Act takes effect September 1, 2017.