

Support HB 1599 by Reps. Bucy, Harless, Oliverson, Jetton, and Bonnen

Uses Already-Verified Information to Facilitate Health Coverage Enrollment for Currently Eligible Kids

HB 1599 will help Texas:

- Reduce duplication of costly and inefficient administrative effort by HHSC staff.
- Reduce the children's uninsured rate, connecting more kids to the health care they need. Texas has the nation's worst uninsured rate for kids, but 400,00 of the state's 995,000 uninsured children are eligible for Medicaid insurance or CHIP.¹
- Ensure that only already-verified, currently eligible children whose parents provide affirmative consent will be enrolled.



There is strong bipartisan support:

- States such as Alabama, South Carolina, Louisiana, and Georgia successfully implemented it.
 - A 2013 Mathematica study on South Carolina's implementation found that it decreased the number of state staff needed to process paperwork, which lowered costs, and reduced unnecessary loss of children's health coverage each year.
- The House Committee passed the bill unanimously (10-0). The House passed it 106-40.
- At the House hearing on HB 1599, zero witnesses registered against it. More than 60 witnesses registered in favor of the bill, including Texans Care for Children, Texas 2036, Texas Public Policy Foundation, Mental Health America of Greater Houston, Texas Association of Business, Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops, American Diabetes Association, Texas Pediatric Society, and others.

How this “express lane” option works:

- HB 1599 allows HHSC to use already-verified information – such as income, household size, and citizenship – from other state programs to move verified, currently eligible kids from bureaucratic gridlock to an “express lane” for enrollment in Medicaid health insurance or CHIP.
- For example, if HHSC determines a child is eligible for SNAP based on income or citizenship information provided by the family, then HHSC can use that same already verified information to determine eligibility for Medicaid rather than re-evaluating the child's income or citizenship using its own methods. HHSC can then enroll that child into coverage if a parent provides affirmative consent to use the express lane option.
- HB 1599 keeps in place the state's current Medicaid and CHIP eligibility requirements.

¹ “Kids Count.” Every Texan, 23 Mar. 2021, <https://everytexan.org/data-center/kids-count/>