

House Bills of Interest – Travis County Health and Human Services and Veterans Services

Bill No	Sponsor	Description	Local Impact	Status Update
<a href="#">CS HB 19</a>	King	This bill directs the Department of Family & Protective Services (DFPS) to create and implement preventative services for veterans and military families who have committed, experienced or are at risk of family violence, abuse or neglect. The program must be designed to coordinate with community based organizations to provide services and must include prevention, early intervention for children and other child and family services. The bill requires Texas Veterans Commission and DSHS to coordinate and run a mental health program for veterans.	Fiscal note indicates that the program will be implemented in El Paso, Killeen and San Antonio but the model could eventually be implemented in Travis County presumably. There is no local impact anticipated. If the program were expanded to include Travis, burden on local services utilized by military families will be reduced. The model of service delivery includes peer advocates, volunteer capacity building and coordination with community based organizations, which all work to reduce reliance on local tax dollars and increase service capacity in communities by leveraging and maximizing state funds.	05/08/2015 <i>H Placed on General State Calendar</i>
<a href="#">HB 175</a>	Kleinschmidt	Establishes a Veterans Recovery Program to provide hyperbaric oxygen treatment to persons who have served in national or state military forces and who have traumatic brain injury or PTSD. Hyperbaric oxygen treatments are approved by the FDA but not for traumatic brain injury. Some veterans, medical professionals treating them, and other persons such as athletes afflicted with traumatic brain injuries have found oxygen treatments to be helpful in symptom management.	The bill has no major direct impact on Travis County. If the bill became law, this treatment would be made available to local veterans and may provide them with some relief of their symptoms, improving their ability to reintegrate and contribute to the community. The treatments are to be paid for with state general fund revenues and reimbursed by public insurance programs so there will be no direct local fiscal impact. Companion is HB 390.	05/04/2015 <i>S Received from the House</i>
<a href="#">HB 418</a>	Wu	This bill adds child victims of trafficking to existing law describing conditions under which governmental entities may take possession of a child without a court order. It would <i>allow</i> commissioner's courts or municipal governing bodies to either establish or contract with another entity to create licensed secure foster homes or group foster homes that are tailored to serve child victims of trafficking that are in the managing conservatorship of DFPS. Appropriate mental health and other services must be provided according to section 5 (d) (1) of the bill by foster homes and foster group homes.	This bill would allow for local control and better oversight of DFPS contracts with foster care providers than currently exists (Foster Care Redesign which is a move toward privatization) but it could also pave the way for a transfer of DFPS foster care costs for housing child victims of trafficking to localities – perhaps a response to the Summer 2014 surge in unaccompanied alien children (UAC).  There is no reliable local data on how many UAC trafficking victims will require foster care in Travis County. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As of August 31, 2014, 76% of UACs were arriving from</li> </ul>	05/04/2015 <i>S Referred to Health &amp; Human Services</i>

Bill No	Sponsor	Description	Local Impact	Status Update
			<p>Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ORR – which processes all unaccompanied minors originating from countries not contiguous to Texas - reports that 477 unaccompanied children were released to sponsors (usually family members) in Travis County in FY 14.</li> <li>• Ninety percent (90%) of UACs are released by ORR into the care of a parent, relative or friend to await adjudication of their case. The remaining 10% are released to foster care. It is unknown how many UACs are victims of trafficking.</li> <li>• Anecdotal evidence suggests that many UACs who are victims of trafficking will not report their victimization to authorities because they know it will delay their processing and release.</li> <li>• The number of UACs arriving in Travis County has declined dramatically in the last 6 months.</li> </ul> <p>There has been a concern that UACs have further stretched the already limited resources of foster care capacity in the state. If counties were able to create new capacity by directly building it out or contracting for it, that would be a positive impact for local vulnerable populations. It is unclear if local entities will pay for this increased capacity, as DFPS is currently funding the foster care system in Texas – increasingly through contracting arrangements as part of the recent foster care redesign.</p> <p>Costs to expanding the County role in providing foster care services for child victims of trafficking could include staffing and training costs to implement contract monitoring and performance oversight. If direct service was the preferred mechanism, costs could include infrastructure, training, staffing, etc. If we use the ORR number released in FY 14 (477) as a total of those UACs released to sponsors, we can reason that this number represents the 90% who do not go into</p>	

House Bills of Interest – Travis County Health and Human Services and Veterans Services

Bill No	Sponsor	Description	Local Impact	Status Update
			foster care and estimate that about 53 did. (Note that this figure does not include UACs from Mexico unless sent to ORR after being screened for trafficking. Note also that we don't know how many of these 53 children are victims of trafficking and would require the specialized foster care services described in the bill. The daily cost of foster care in a home setting in 2012 ranged from \$23 to \$175 per day depending on the needs of the child.	
<a href="#">HB 450</a>	Alonzo	The bill establishes resource centers at institutions of higher education to encourage veterans and their families to attend public universities.	At least one of the proposed resource centers will be in the Central Texas region. This may not be in Travis County. The bill directs the Texas Veteran's Commission to create the Center so this does not appear to have a local fiscal impact, other than that local veterans will benefit from the resource center and may enjoy improved educational and employment outcomes as a result of the Center's existence.	04/22/2015 H Left pending in committee
<a href="#">HB 570</a>	Allen	The bill ensures that Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits will not be denied to eligible family members of heads of household who are not in compliance with employment requirements.	If benefits are protected, families are more likely to maintain or achieve food security.	04/13/2015 H Left pending in committee
<a href="#">HB 589</a>	Burkett	The bill excludes any person applying for unemployment benefits from receiving them should they refuse to take a drug test required prior to beginning a job for which a drug test is required.	There may be a marginal decrease in the number of unemployed persons drawing unemployment benefits. This will adversely affect individuals and families in the County, decreasing incomes and in many cases, family stability.	05/07/2015 H Considered in Calendars
<a href="#">HB 747</a>	Bohac	The bill mandates that SNAP and TANF recipients have their photograph on their benefit cards. HB 620 is a duplicate.	The bill will add an additional requirement for receipt of benefits for local eligible persons. Imposing further requirements on eligible persons - particularly those requiring an office visit to be photographed- may pose barriers for working families who don't have access to transportation and are struggling to secure basic needs.	04/13/2015 H Withdrawn from schedule

House Bills of Interest – Travis County Health and Human Services and Veterans Services

Bill No	Sponsor	Description	Local Impact	Status Update
			Furthermore, the SNAP card is used by the entire family so this bill could complicate use of the card. Many seniors who have SNAP cards and are house-bound will have difficulties as well.	
<a href="#">HB 839</a>	Naishtat	The bill allows for the HHSC Commissioner to adopt rules necessary to implement presumptive CHIP and Medicaid eligibility for children under 19 released from detention or other correctional facility.	<p>Bill will provide continuous healthcare coverage for vulnerable youth populations. This will likely result in less non-emergent ER care and better health - including behavioral health - outcomes for this population.</p> <p>No direct fiscal impact though better access to preventive care- particularly behavioral healthcare for children who have been in correctional facilities will mean lower burden on the local mental health authority and other safety net partners in Travis County.</p>	<i>05/11/2015 S Received from the House</i>
<a href="#">HB 840</a>	Naishtat	The bill seeks to make federal law banning persons convicted of felony drug offenses from receiving public benefits inapplicable to SNAP eligibility determination.	Less restrictions on SNAP receipt means fewer local dollars will be in demand for basic needs assistance. No direct fiscal impact to the County, but as stated above, more access to SNAP benefits means fewer County resources (and community partners' resources) will need to be allocated to food pantries and other forms of basic needs assistance.	<i>04/13/2015 H Left pending in committee</i>
<a href="#">HB 843</a>	Naishtat	Mandates that DFPS ensures that for youth transitioning out of foster care, a housing stability plan is included in each youth's transition plan. The plan includes an assessment of housing affordability, responsibility and suitability regarding behavioral health needs.	No direct impact but will improve outcomes for local youth transitioning out of foster care and likely save public resources as a result of improved housing stability in this population. No direct fiscal impact but will improve outcomes for local youth transitioning out of foster care and likely save public resources as a result of improved	<i>05/08/2015 H Laid on the table subject to call</i>

House Bills of Interest – Travis County Health and Human Services and Veterans Services

Bill No	Sponsor	Description	Local Impact	Status Update
			housing stability in this population.	
<a href="#">HB 859</a>	Rodriguez	Allows Vet Techs to perform examinations and give vaccines under supervision of licensed vet.	May expand capacity of local vets to perform public health functions.	04/21/2015 H Left pending in committee
<a href="#">HB 867</a>	Hernandez	The bill establishes The Texas Women Veterans Program which aims to connect women to benefits and services.	The bill may improve outcomes for women veterans in Travis County. The bill does not have a direct impact on Travis County but may bring additional services and other resources to Travis County women veterans. Companion is SB 2001.	05/11/2015 H Placed on General State Calendar
<a href="#">HB 887</a>	Hernandez	Allows victims of trafficking who are unlawfully present in the U.S. and are between the ages of 18 and 21 to receive special immigrant status. Affected youth will remain under court's jurisdiction until their 21st birthday, lawful permanent residence (LPR) is granted, or appeal for LPR is denied. The bill also increases penalties for human trafficking.	There will be more activity in County courts. More information is needed on costs of processing affected persons in the County Court system per this bill. If affected populations receive special immigrant status, they will likely be eligible for treatment and other services which may result in better outcomes for these youth and their families.  If stricter penalties for trafficking prove to have a deterrent effect on the commission of this crime, less public investment in addressing and treating its effects will have to be spent over time.	04/14/2015 H No action taken in committee
<a href="#">HB 907</a>	Phillips	Per the LBB's fiscal note on the identical bill filed in 83rd session (R)(HB 691):  The bill would amend the Local Government Code to authorize the governing body of a county or a municipality, by order or ordinance, to adopt regulations regarding halfway houses in an unincorporated area of the county or municipality and would stipulate the processes and scope of	Travis County Commissioner's Court could require an owner operator of a halfway house to obtain license or permit, renew license or permit and to charge a fee to cover the costs of processing applications and conducting investigations. Travis County District Court would have jurisdiction in suits arising from denial, revocation or suspensions of licenses or permits. It is assumed that a county or a municipality would adopt regulations if a sufficient fee was imposed to offset costs for	04/06/2015 H Left pending in committee

House Bills of Interest – Travis County Health and Human Services and Veterans Services

Bill No	Sponsor	Description	Local Impact	Status Update
		<p>regulations. Halfway House is defined as a residential facility that is privately (or NPO) operated, not under contract with a public entity, NOT a drug treatment facility, and operated with purpose of providing housing to two or more individuals who are not related by blood or affinity who have been placed on community supervision, are released on parole or to mandatory supervision.</p>	<p>processing applications and investigating applicants. The fiscal impact associated with inspecting halfway houses would vary depending on the number and location of halfway houses and the amounts that may be partially offset by fees. Travis County reported there could be costs for a site plan review (\$5,000), but the amounts would not be significant. Travis County’s affected department’s current fiscal year budget is \$39.3million. There could be costs associated with enforcement, prosecution and confinement, and revenue gain from fines imposed and collected that would vary depending on the number of offenses committed; however, the amounts are not anticipated to have a significant fiscal impact. A halfway house is defined as a residential facility that is privately (or NPO) operated, not under contract with public entity, NOT a drug treatment facility, and operated with purpose of providing housing to two or more individuals who are not related by blood or affinity who have been placed on community supervision, are released on parole or to mandatory supervision.</p>	
<p><a href="#">HB 1021</a></p>	<p>Farias</p>	<p>The bill mandates that the Texas Veteran's Commission undergo a needs assessment and allocation process for funding for Veteran's assistance programs.</p>	<p>There is no direct local impact, unless local priorities arise in the needs assessment. Increased capacity for veterans services, particularly resulting from a systematic planning process, will be good practice and should this process address local needs, there would be a positive local impact.</p>	<p><i>04/29/2015 H Comm. report sent to Local &amp; Consent Calendar</i></p>

House Bills of Interest – Travis County Health and Human Services and Veterans Services

Bill No	Sponsor	Description	Local Impact	Status Update
<a href="#">CSHB 1048</a>	Farias	Changes eligibility for participation in Veteran's Court. Adds to qualifying circumstances sexual victimization while in military Service or as a result of military service, and removes the stipulation that sexual trauma have occurred in a combat zone or other hazardous area. Bill also reduces fee by half for participating Veterans. CS adds persons convicted of or placed on deferred adjudication community supervision for misdemeanors or felony offenses and names the program "Veteran Treatment Court".	Fee provision will not affect Travis because our program does not currently assess a fee. Bill will increase number participating but probably not dramatically. Veteran's Courts may create cost savings by reducing recidivism and related costs in local jails, ERs and Courts.	05/12/2015 H Placed on General State Calendar
<a href="#">HB 1069</a>	Rodriguez	Per the Fiscal Note on HB 2072 (83R) which seems to be identical: The bill would amend Chapter 81 of the Human Resources Code to require that the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) license any person who provides interpreting services for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing; exceptions are provided. Currently, DARS' Board for Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI) is responsible for testing and issuing of certificates to interpreters, and only those interpreting court proceedings are required to be certified. The bill would create a new subchapter assigning all of BEI's current duties and responsibilities for issuing certificates to the new licensing program. The bill would require that fees relating to licenses and examinations be set in amounts sufficient to defray the costs of the licensing program. The bill would provide for administrative penalties.	LBB's fiscal note states that there will not be a fiscal impact to local governments. Benefits to the County and the human services arena in general include an increase in legitimacy conferred onto the practice of interpretation.	05/11/2015 H Postponed
<a href="#">CSHB 2084</a>	Munoz, Jr.	The bill attempts to make STAR Medicaid managed care rate setting more transparent by publishing actuarial reports and clearly identifying methodology and data sources.	No direct local fiscal impact but important to watch. Apparently, greater transparency for rate setting was a recommendation in a recent State Audit. Companion is HB 1093.	05/06/2015 S Received from the House
<a href="#">HB 1258</a>	King	The bill restricts persons who are delinquent in making child support payments from receiving SNAP.	As with other SNAP restrictions, there are concerns about dependent children enduring restricted access to food. Again, any restrictions on SNAP benefits put greater strain on local safety net resources.	04/13/2015 H Left pending in committee

House Bills of Interest – Travis County Health and Human Services and Veterans Services

Bill No	Sponsor	Description	Local Impact	Status Update
			Information on the number of persons that would be affected by this provision is not available at this time but this bill would have an indirect fiscal impact on the County, placing greater demand on food assistance provided through community centers and other County services as well as basic needs services provided by County partners and contractors.	
<a href="#">HB 1259</a>	King	The bill mandates that a SNAP recipient who loses benefits because they have not been compliant with employment requirements three times is permanently barred from SNAP benefit receipt.	It is unknown how many recipients this would affect. Any bill restricting access to federally funded benefits will place more pressure on the local safety net. There will be an indirect negative impact on the local safety net, particularly sources of basic needs assistance that do not include employment requirements.	<i>04/13/2015 H Left pending in committee</i>
<a href="#">HB 1267</a>	Thompson	The bill limits the amount of time a convicted felon is barred from receiving SNAP benefits to two years from the date of conviction of possession, use or distribution of a controlled substance. Companion is SB 606	Greater access to food stamp benefits will decrease reliance on local safety net services for vulnerable families. It seems like states can legislate a two-year suspension to make benefits available to affected persons who would otherwise face lifetime ban. Again, removing barriers to federally-funded benefits relieves pressure on the County and its partners to fund basic needs assistance.	<i>05/08/2015 H Placed on General State Calendar</i>
<a href="#">HB 1305</a>	Bonnen	The bill gives school districts and charter school boards the option to either participate in the national school breakfast program OR to develop and implement a locally funded program with the same eligibility as the national program. Districts may have campuses participating in the national program and others participating in the local option. Current law states that the number of educationally disadvantaged students is determined by averaging the best six months' enrollment in the national	Supporters say locally funded breakfast programs can allow for superior nutritional quality of meals served. Per the fiscal note: "School districts who chose not to offer the National School Breakfast Program, and instead choose to develop and implement a locally funded program, could incur some administrative costs and experience a loss of federal revenue, but such action would be voluntary and amounts would vary by district. Some districts would receive additional funding under the modified calculation of the compensatory education allotment under	<i>05/11/2015 S Referred to Education</i>

House Bills of Interest – Travis County Health and Human Services and Veterans Services

Bill No	Sponsor	Description	Local Impact	Status Update
		school lunch program from the preceding school year OR by the commissioner rule in the case of a district with no campuses participating in the program. The bill changes how the number of educationally disadvantaged students to include all students eligible to be enrolled (rather than enrolled) and allows districts to opt instead for commissioner rule on how to determine this number regardless of campus participation in the program.	the provisions of this bill.” Companion is SB 981. Amendments add that the price of locally provided meals may not exceed the maximum allowable rate under the national program and give some flexibility of funding to pay for life skills and child care expenses for those at-risk of dropping out.	
<a href="#">HB 1329</a>	Naishtat	The bill mandates that counties in which emergency detention procedures for the involuntary commitment of persons with mental illness are initiated pay for related hearings or other proceedings. The bill states that affected counties must pay costs of all hearings and proceedings until the involuntarily committed persons are discharged from mental health services and affected counties may not use the \$40 filing fee collected by probate court clerks for every mental health case filed to pay the hearing costs.	It seems like this bill is intended to decrease use of involuntary commitment, presumably as part of an effort to direct resources toward community-based prevention and treatment. More research is needed to interpret the local impact of this bill. It was filed last session but failed to pass. There will be a fiscal impact to local courts.	<i>05/11/2015 S Received from the House</i>
<a href="#">HB 1330</a>	Naishtat	Mandates that states or if appropriate – Counties – pay cost of hearings or court proceedings for those involuntary committed to inpatient mental health facilities who are under 200% of the FPL and uninsured.	It seems like this bill is intended to decrease use of involuntary commitment, presumably as part of an effort to direct resources toward community-based prevention and treatment. More research is needed to interpret the local impact of this bill. It was filed last session but failed to pass. There will be a fiscal impact to local courts.	<i>05/05/2015 H Left pending in committee</i>
<a href="#">CSHB 1393</a>	Tuner	The bill mandates that HHSC and DSHS establish through Medicaid a home and community based services program for persons with severe and persistent mental illness who are at greatest risk of costly institutionalization. CS adds peer counseling to the array of services that	Our local mental health authority (ATCIC) and other providers of mental health services in the community would contract with DSHS and HHSC to provide services. Expanded capacity for these services will serve more people in need of need of services without the social and fiscal	<i>05/05/2015 H Committee report sent to Calendars</i>

House Bills of Interest – Travis County Health and Human Services and Veterans Services

Bill No	Sponsor	Description	Local Impact	Status Update
		may be part of the program portfolio.	costs of institutionalization. There will be a fiscal impact locally but it will be determined by conditions of service contracts, reimbursement rates, and terms of the Medicaid waiver if one is needed. There is evidence that a lack of sufficient community-based services for those with severe and persistent mental illness results in increased incarceration costs. This includes millions in local dollars annually for jail bed days for those awaiting competency for trial, extra jail supervision and staffing, and medical and behavioral health costs, including medication costs for those with severe and persistent mental illness.	
<a href="#">HB 1457</a>	Blanco	Requires each state agency with more than 100 full time employees to designate one employee to who will stand informed on trends/developments around hiring veterans, recruit veterans to fill open positions within the agency, and to serve as a contact both inside and outside of the agency for information on employment services available. Related to HB 754.	This bill will have a positive impact on Travis County veterans by growing their employment potential and therefore earning potential. However, recent data from the American Community Survey suggests that Travis County veterans have a higher rate of labor force participation than civilians; potential unintended negative impact upon employment potential for other special populations unknown.	<i>05/11/2015 H Passed to engrossment</i>
<a href="#">HB 1484</a>	Blanco	This bill establishes regional coordinators in major centers of economic growth that consult with the VA and the US Small Business administration to reduce redundancy of services for the veteran entrepreneur program.	This bill is a potentially cost saving measure for veterans' services as it reduces redundancy; these freed resources may then be applied to unmet needs within the population. No known local fiscal impact.	<i>05/07/2015 H Laid on the table subject to call</i>
<a href="#">HB 1528</a>	Farrar	The bill expands the HIV Medication Program –using existing Program funds as well as funds allocated to the Testing and Counseling Program – to provide discharge planning and transitional primary care and social support services to HIV infected individuals incarcerated in county jails in counties with populations exceeding 3.3 million who are approaching	In affected counties, this bill will reduce transmission of the disease and will likely ensure more stability for affected persons exiting incarceration. This bill will not affect Travis County due to the population constraint but serves as an improvement in care for this population and will reduce local costs (ER use, hospitalizations,	<i>04/20/2015 H Left pending in committee</i>

House Bills of Interest – Travis County Health and Human Services and Veterans Services

Bill No	Sponsor	Description	Local Impact	Status Update
		release or who are incarcerated for a short period.	recidivism) in counties in which it is implemented.	
<a href="#">HB 1541</a>	Burkett	The bill mandates that the Health and Human Services Commission develop and adopt rules regarding peer specialists that serve persons with mental illness and substance abuse under Medicaid.	Peer supports for behavioral health have been recommended in local planning efforts as a way to address the gap in mental health and substance abuse services for County residents. No direct fiscal impact but expansion or improvement of behavioral health services is a critical need locally. If there is a federal payer for these, the burden on local resources such as ATCIC will be reduced. Peer support services do not replace other mental health services but are believed to reduce the frequency of utilization of more expensive services.	<i>05/11/2015 S Received from the House</i>
<a href="#">HB 1616</a>	Rodriguez	Establishes the “Double Dollar” pilot program under SNAP which operates in food deserts (defined in the bill as a census tract in which poverty rate is 20% or higher or MFI is at or below 80% of the area MFI and at least 500 people or at least 33% of the census area’s population reside more than one mile from a grocery store in non-rural tract or 10 miles in rural tract) and doubles the value of weekly benefits for purchase of farmer’s market produce.	The program may have a positive effect on local SNAP recipients’ nutritional intake.	<i>04/15/2015 H Left pending in committee</i>
<a href="#">HB 1740</a>	Thompson	Allows vet techs working under the supervision of Veterinarians employed by municipalities or counties to administer the rabies vaccine.	May increase the number of animals in the county who receive the rabies vaccine. May decrease local costs for animal services provided to treat or prevent rabies. Companion is SB 1780.	<i>05/12/2015 E Sent to the Governor</i>
<a href="#">HB 1762</a>	Otto	Establishes a health care advocacy program for veterans that will work to resolve issues of access to benefits and services at the systems level, coordinate with healthcare providers to bolster veteran healthcare, review and research best practices in veteran’s healthcare, recommend	This program seeks to remove barriers to access to healthcare for veterans. Ease of use and access are frequently cited as being the most crucial barrier to veteran health. If this bill provides Travis County veterans greater access to USVA care, some burden on local service	<i>05/13/2015 S Scheduled for public hearing on . . .</i>

House Bills of Interest – Travis County Health and Human Services and Veterans Services

Bill No	Sponsor	Description	Local Impact	Status Update
		improvements to the executive director of the commission, incorporate veteran healthcare needs into the commission’s strategic plan, assist veterans in accessing benefits and services, recommend legislative initiatives to address veteran health needs, and evaluate the efficacy of the program.	providers may be relieved to the extent that this population is seeking locally funded care and services because they cannot access federal benefits to which they and their families are entitled.	
<a href="#">HB 1849</a>	King	Directs state agencies to exempt active duty military services members from penalties related to failure to renew licensures if the failure is related to military service. Extends license renewal process for active duty service members. Creates alternative licensing procedures for military service members, veterans, and military spouses including waving prerequisites for licensure in light of applicant’s credentials. Directs state agencies to develop alternative competency routes related to licensure of military service members. Directs state agencies to expedite license process for military service members, veterans, and spouses. Amends occupations code to allow alternative experience accrued while in service to count toward apprenticeship requirements.	This bill relieves military service members of licensure and apprenticeship burdens by expediting the licensing process, removing late penalties, and allowing commensurate military experience to fulfill requirements. This bill could positively impact military service members’ reentry into civilian economies. Fiscal impact on county unknown.	<i>05/04/2015 H Comm. report sent to Local &amp; Consent Calendar</i>
<a href="#">CSHB 1908</a>	Naishtat	Bill mandates that certain offenders with mental impairments be identified and qualified for the continuity of care system, regardless of diagnosis (I don't see a list of diagnoses in the existing law). The bill effectively broadens eligibility for MH services beyond persons suffering from clinically severe depression, schizophrenia, or bipolar disorders.	ATCIC and LMHAs in the state may bear a fiscal burden to comply, as they may have to expand their diagnostic eligibility criteria (depending on the existing criteria and operations regarding offender access to services). Offenders released to Travis County may have access to more robust mental health services. This will increase their ability to successfully reintegrate to the local economy and community and likely decrease recidivism in the affected population and future use of costly locally funded behavioral health and social services. Companion is SB 1477.	<i>05/08/2015 H Comm. report sent to Local &amp; Consent Calendar</i>

House Bills of Interest – Travis County Health and Human Services and Veterans Services

Bill No	Sponsor	Description	Local Impact	Status Update
<a href="#">HB 2523</a>	Collier	Suspends Medicaid eligibility for those accused or convicted of a crime and confined to county jail and automatically reinstates Medicaid eligibility upon release provided eligibility is still intact. Gives sheriff the option to provide notice to the Social Security Administration and HHSC of the release or discharge of inmate in receipt of benefits from those respective agencies but does not require said notification (as did HB 37 from 83R).	Inmates released without automatic reinstatement of benefits often experience delays in accessing needed care and income supports. This puts a strain on safety net services in the local community, such as emergency rooms, food banks, and public and non-profit emergency assistance services. Loss of Medicaid benefits can result in dire consequences for those with chronic physical and behavioral health disorders. These consequences can lead to costly hospitalizations, ER visits and reincarceration. Fiscal note for 83 (r) HB 37: Should the sheriff opt to provide notice to state and federal agencies of inmates in receipt of public benefits Travis County reported estimated costs totaling \$110,000 which would include costs for two additional employees with salary and benefits (\$100,000); capital outlay (\$4,000); and operational costs (\$6,000) in FY 2014; and \$106,000 in FY 2015 through FY 2018. The county also added that the fiscal impact would depend on an interlocal agreement being established with the federal government to receive the data, and that an agreement does not currently exist. Travis County has a population of 1.1 million and the affected department's current (2014) fiscal year budget is \$149.0 million. Companions are HB 144 and SB 1777.	05/13/2015 H Placed on General State Calendar

House Bills of Interest – Travis County Health and Human Services and Veterans Services

Bill No	Sponsor	Description	Local Impact	Status Update
<a href="#">HB 2718</a>	Parker	The bill directs HHSC to create a program connecting persons eligible for TANF, SNAP and Medicaid with faith and community based organizations who may offer "supplemental assistance" to these persons. Bill states that all persons applying for these public benefits MUST be informed of the program prior to applying for benefits.	Note that statewide there are 71,308 TANF recipients. 61,574 of these - or 86% are children. The Travis County population makes up 4% of the total Texas population. So this bill is attempting to transfer state basic needs assistance for 2,852 individuals (again, 86% of whom are children) to local basic needs providers. TANF reporting is not available by county and clear payment information is not posted by HHSC. There were 114,313 Travis County SNAP recipients as of February 2015 - 67,185 of whom are children (59%). The average payment - I am assuming this is a monthly benefit - is \$238. As for Medicaid, it is questionable if there is local capacity among community and/or faith-based organizations to "supplement" this program. 114,708 individuals of all ages were enrolled as of October 2013. 73% of these are children (84,186).	04/23/2015 <i>S Referred to Health &amp; Human Services</i>
<a href="#">HB 3035</a>	Martinez	Bill calls for an analysis of the LBB's estimate of savings to the state as a result of Medicaid expansion as laid out in a fiscal note to SB 7 (82 I) with particular attention to prescription drug and pharmacy benefits. <a href="http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/tlodocs/821/fiscalnotes/pdf/SB00007F.pdf">http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/tlodocs/821/fiscalnotes/pdf/SB00007F.pdf</a> #	Expansion of pharmacy managed care has apparently resulted in mom-and-pop pharmacies having to close in the South Texas region. Results of this study may be important in understanding some of the unintended consequences of managed care expansion.	04/30/2015 <i>H Considered in Calendars</i>
<a href="#">HB 3195</a>	Bernal	Allows HHSC and TDI to make rules regarding a healthcare pilot program serving low-income individuals. Adds a chapter to the Health and Safety Code. TDI will designate 10 specific geographic areas in which this pilot will operate. Eligibility for areas is as follows: -the percentage of uninsured adults in the area is above the state average (currently 22%) -must be a	Bill is vague but any expansion to coverage is a good thing for human service providers, counties and municipalities with large numbers of uninsured persons. Travis County will not be a site for the pilot, as our uninsurance rate is and has been above that of the state. Neighboring counties with higher than state proportions of uninsured (traveling to	05/05/2015 <i>H Left pending in committee</i>

House Bills of Interest – Travis County Health and Human Services and Veterans Services

Bill No	Sponsor	Description	Local Impact	Status Update
		healthcare professional shortage area by USDHHS -must be served by promotoras trained as stipulated in the Health and Safety Code, Chapter 48, Subchapter B . Eligibility for individuals to receive health coverage under the pilot i s as follows: -income less than 138% FPL AND -parent of child currently enrolled in Medicaid or CHIP. Coverage and benefits are TBD by the Commissioner (HHSC).	Travis for care and contributing to our uncompensated care burden) that may be eligible for the pilot will decrease the burden on Travis County health and human services and the safety net should they participate in the pilot. Companion is SB 1995.	
<a href="#">HB 3036</a>	Martinez	Bill calls for an analysis of the LBB’s estimate of savings to the state as a result of Medicaid managed expansion as laid out in a <a href="#">fiscal note</a> to SB 7 (82 I)	South Texas was the cite of the expansions related to this bill so Travis County will not be directly affected but it is worth monitoring to understand some of the possible effects of expansion of managed care.	<i>05/06/2015 S Received from the House</i>
<a href="#">HB 3366</a>	Sheffield	This bill strikes language from existing statute governing contractors for Pharmacy services under Medicaid and CHIP managed care that specifies requirements for compliance and outlines a new reimbursement methodology for prescription drugs for Managed Care. Seems to call for more frequent updating of indexes to prices for drug reimbursement and considers raising dispensing fees.	Expected to result in a reduction in drug reimbursement rates and an increase in dispensing fees. Companion is SB 1612.	<i>04/30/2015 H Committee report sent to Calendars</i>
<a href="#">HB 3547</a>	Larson	Allows private employers to voluntarily give preference to veterans when hiring.	Increased employment opportunities for veterans. Companion is SB 1713.	<i>05/08/2015 H Placed on Local, Consent, and Res. Calendar</i>