

FLOOR ALERT May 4th: Oppose HB 4713 (Plesa)

Mandates Coverage for Non-Medical Social Determinants of Health & Raises Insurance Premiums

HB 4713 is yet another mandate that raises costs of health insurance for businesses and families. But unlike other health care mandates, this mandate attempts to require coverage for non-medical social determinants of health on everyone's health insurance. That's a bad precedent and an expensive concept. In fact, California wouldn't even pass this mandate after it was found to cost \$70 million per year in added premium costs for these non-medical services and an independent state analysis questioned the effectiveness of this treatment approach.

Health insurance shouldn't be forced to cover services outside of health care. This bill would create coverage requirements for "mentoring", "advocacy", and even job placement. The state has publicly funded programs to cover these services for people with severe mental health needs and shouldn't be imposing those costs on businesses and families.

The cost of health insurance consistently ranks as the number one biggest problem and priority for small business. Adding new, expensive mandates to health benefit plans increases the costs for businesses and employers and adds to the growing number of uninsured in Texas.

Employers ultimately pay the high price for mandated health care benefits through higher health care premiums, co-pays, reduced wages, and benefit reductions. Most large businesses receive their health care benefits under self-funded arrangements, which are exempt from state mandates. Thus, health benefit mandates more negatively affect small employer and individual policies.

This session, Texas House Committees heard 48 new health coverage mandate bills, passed out 42 from committees, and have passed 19 from the Chamber. These are mandates that exceed the federal requirements created by the Affordable Care Act and add costs to businesses and families.

HB 4713 is an expensive mandate that goes beyond health care services. We urge you to oppose the bill.

