OLR Bill Analysis
HB 7278

AN ACT CONCERNING MOBILE INTEGRATED HEALTH CARE.

SUMMARY
This bill requires the Department of Public Health (DPH), by January 1, 2020, and in consultation with local health departments, to establish a mobile integrated health care program to enhance health outcomes for patients seeking health care from an emergency medical services (EMS) organization under non-emergency conditions.

The bill defines “mobile integrated health care” as the provision of clinically appropriate medical evaluations, treatment, transport, or referrals to other health care providers by a paramedic acting within his or her scope of practice as part of an EMS organization within the EMS system under DPH’s mobile integrated health care program.

Under the program, a licensed paramedic is allowed to provide patients with mobile integrated health care, including monitoring patient health and providing disease management education. The bill requires DPH to establish payment rates for paramedics who provide such services.

The bill also allows paramedics to transport patients by ambulance to alternate destinations (i.e., medically appropriate facilities other than emergency departments) as part of the program. An ambulance used for this purpose must meet state regulatory requirements for a basic level ambulance, including requirements on medically necessary supplies and services.

Additionally, the bill adds paramedics to the list of health care providers authorized to provide telehealth services.

Lastly, the bill makes technical and conforming changes.
EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2019

§ 3 — RATE SETTING

The bill requires the DPH commissioner to establish rates for licensed paramedics who treat and release patients, without transporting them to an emergency department, in connection with DPH’s mobile integrated health program. Paramedics must provide these services within their scope of practice and following protocols approved by their sponsor hospital.

§ 5 — TELEHEALTH PROVIDERS

This bill adds licensed paramedics to the list of health care providers authorized to provide health care services using telehealth. Under the bill, they must provide telehealth services within their profession’s scope of practice and standard of care, just as other telehealth providers must under existing law. By law, telehealth means delivering healthcare services through information and communication technologies to facilitate the diagnosis, consultation, treatment, education, care management, and self-management of a patient's physical and mental health.

Existing law already allows the following health care providers to provide health care services using telehealth: licensed physicians, advanced practice registered nurses, registered nurses, physician assistants, pharmacists, occupational and physical therapists, naturopaths, chiropractors, optometrists, podiatrists, psychologists, marital and family therapists, clinical or master social workers, alcohol and drug counselors, professional counselors, dietician-nutritionists, speech and language pathologists, respiratory care practitioners, and audiologists.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Public Health Committee

Joint Favorable
Yea 21  Nay 0  (03/22/2019)