



Physicians Caring for Texans

Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Written Testimony of the Texas Medical Association
Senate Bill 403 by Sen. Drew Springer
March 22, 2023

Chair Kolkhorst, Vice Chair Perry, and members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee, the Texas Medical Association, representing more than 57,000 physician and medical student members across the state, appreciates the opportunity to submit written comments *on* Senate Bill 403.

As physicians who greatly value science and robust, evidence-based research and data, we support continued study that contributes to the greater body of scientific knowledge and evidence.

The SARS-CoV-2 virus unequivocally upended the world of public health and medicine, and scientists responded with vaccines, therapies, and pharmaceuticals to help save the lives of many. Further studies are a good thing, and this proposed study has the potential to add onto the existing body of evidence regarding the COVID-19 vaccines.

TMA supports further research and offers the following points for consideration:

- Scientists have conducted dozens of studies to date on the side effects, effectiveness, and adverse reactions to the various COVID-19 vaccines, and such painstaking study is paramount in the development of any vaccine. This is also a required component of the United States' rigorous vaccine safety monitoring system. Long-term studies on the COVID-19 vaccines from a variety of independent entities are also ongoing worldwide.
- Though the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) is an excellent choice to conduct this study, we recognize how thinly stretched our state public health agency staff is. As such, we recommend strong fiscal support for DSHS with this legislation to conduct the study with the best tools and team members on hand. Alternately, another research body to potentially consider to conduct this study is the Texas Epidemic Public Health Institute.
- Without question, any study of this magnitude requires following robust, thorough, and scientifically sound research methods. However, as with any research, results are not definitive and are only applicable to the study population at hand, with limited generalizability. Long-term monitoring of the vaccine and its side effects, effectiveness, and adverse reactions will be – and must be – ongoing over time.

TMA also sees as one of the greatest benefits of the proposed study in SB 403 that it potentially could help dispel misconceptions about the COVID-19 vaccines and provide confidence to patients that the vaccines are safe and effective. Thank you for the opportunity to comment. For further questions, please contact Matt Dowling, TMA director of public affairs, at matt.dowling@texmed.org.