

BACKGROUND:

A December 2000 report of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HRSA) shows that Texas ranks 44th among the states in the number of pharmacists per 100,000 population. According to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, the South Texas region, excluding Bexar County, has one of the lowest population to provider ratios of pharmacists compared to other regions of the state. In May 2000, the state's four pharmacy schools reported 315 graduates from Pharm.D programs. Although the schools expect to increase the number of graduates from existing schools over the next few years, those totals are still not expected to meet the future demand for pharmacists in the state. The Texas Workforce Commission has projected 430 job openings per year through 2008. A new pharmacy school in South Texas would provide closer access to a professional school education for South Texas students and would allow more to remain in South Texas for the entire length of the six-year degree. It will also potentially help meet the projected demand for pharmacists in the state and help to relieve the shortage of pharmacists in the Texas-Mexico Border region.

PURPOSE:

The legislation would establish a pharmacy school at Texas A&M University in Kingsville to address the shortage of pharmacists in the South Texas region.