



Health Care Regulation Guidance Letter

Number: GL 22-0001
Title: Implementation of House Bill (HB) 525, 87 th Legislature, Regular Session, 2021
Provider Types: Abortion Facilities, Ambulatory Surgical Centers, Birthing Centers, Chemical Dependency Treatment Facilities, Crisis Stabilization Units, End Stage Renal Disease Facilities, Freestanding Emergency Medical Care Facilities, General Hospitals, Narcotic Treatment Programs, Psychiatric Hospitals, Special Care Facilities, Special Hospitals
Date Issued: February 3, 2022

1.0 Subject and Purpose

This letter describes how HHSC will carry out its regulatory functions under HB 525. [HB 525](#), relating to the protection of religious organizations, became effective on June 18, 2021.

2.0 Policy Details & Provider Responsibilities

2.1 Legislative Mandate

HB 525 designates religious organizations¹ as essential businesses at all times, including during a declared disaster. The law prohibits state agencies, including HHSC, from prohibiting religious organizations from engaging in religious or other related activities or from continuing to operate in the discharge of its foundational faith-based mission and purpose. It also prohibits state agencies from ordering a religious organization to close or otherwise alter its purpose or activities.

¹Per Government Code, [§2401.001\(4\)](#), a religious organization is an organization open to the public that is a religious organization as defined in the [Civil Practice and Remedies Code §110.011\(b\)](#).

2.2 HHSC Inspection Activities

HHSC is responsible for regulating the Texas facilities that fall under its jurisdiction equally and without regard to whether they are operated by a religious organization.

The focus of regulatory activity is on ensuring compliance with applicable state law and regulations governing health and safety. HHSC does not, and will not, intervene in any religious activities being conducted by a facility, regardless of whether the facility is operated by a religious organization.

Under the law, HHSC will continue to conduct applicable application, survey, investigation, and enforcement activities for all regulated providers in accordance with applicable provisions of state law. Accordingly, HHSC will meet its responsibilities to protect the health and safety of individuals in the care of facilities regulated by HHSC, regardless of who operates a facility.

3.0 Background/History

HHSC is issuing this letter to clarify its response to HB 525, 87th Legislature, Regular Session, 2021.

4.0 Resources

View HB 525 at:

<https://capitol.texas.gov/tlodocs/87R/billtext/html/HB00525F.htm>.

View Government Code §2401.001 at:

<https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/GV/htm/GV.2401.htm#2401.001>.

View Civil Practices and Remedies Code §110.011 at:

<https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/CP/htm/CP.110.htm#110.011>.

5.0 Contact Information

If you have any questions about this letter, please contact the Policy, Rules, and Training unit by email at: HCR_PRT@hhs.texas.gov.