

SENATE BILL SB-26

Introduced by Senator Melissa Hurtado (D-16)

An act relating to Healthcare Access and Rural Program.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB-26, Melissa Hurtado (D-16). Healthcare Access and Rural Program.

This bill would create a program within the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) titled Healthcare Access and Rural Program, also referred to as HARP, which would provide subsidized transportation to medical appointments in conjunction with existing transportation services provided by Metro Micro.

Vote: Majority. **Appropriations/fiscal:** yes. **Local program:** no.

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1.

- a. This bill establishes a new program within the California Department of Transportation, called the Healthcare Access and Rural Program, or HARP.
- b. HARP is a transportation service to medical appointments for rural and suburban communities in District 16 in partnership with an already successful and affordable transportation service called Metro Micro.
- c. HARP will provide transportation to hospitals, medical appointments, and other centers of medical specialty for people living in District 16's suburban and rural areas.

SEC. 2.

- a. The goal of this bill is to decrease barriers to transportation and improve quality of life for District 16 residents through efficient and reliable transportation to medical appointments.
- b. This bill aims to keep fares as low-cost as possible, especially for eligible students, the elderly, minors, those with disabilities, and lower-income residents.
- c. Transit will be timed and routed according to the needs of medical appointments, which may take place in the morning, evening, nights, weekends, etc.
- d. Booking options will be made through the Micro Metro app and community outreach. Caltrans shall report on the progress of HARP to the Legislature annually.
- e. Caltrans shall implement surveys to gather information about HARP, such as satisfaction and technical difficulties, annually.

SEC. 3

- a. The sum of \$5,000,000 is hereby appropriated from the General Fund to the California Department of Transportation, also referred to as Caltrans, for implementation of the Healthcare Access and Rural Program, also referred to as HARP, for the 2027-2028 fiscal year.
- b. All other funding for HARP is subject to appropriation by the Legislature as part of the annual budget process. This act takes effect as specified in Section 4.

SEC. 4

- a. It takes effect January 1, 2027.