

AN ACT

relating to a preventive services program and mental health programs for veterans and military families.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Subtitle E, Title 2, Human Resources Code, is amended by adding Chapter 53 to read as follows:

CHAPTER 53. PREVENTIVE SERVICES FOR VETERANS AND MILITARY FAMILIES

Sec. 53.001. DEFINITIONS. In this chapter:

(1) "Department" means the Department of Family and Protective Services.

(2) "Veteran" means a person who has served in:

(A) the army, navy, air force, coast guard, or marine corps of the United States;

(B) the state military forces as defined by Section 431.001, Government Code; or

(C) an auxiliary service of one of those branches of the armed forces.

Sec. 53.002. VETERANS AND MILITARY FAMILIES PREVENTIVE SERVICES PROGRAM. (a) The department shall develop and implement a preventive services program to serve veterans and military families who have committed or experienced or who are at a high risk of:

(1) family violence; or

(2) abuse or neglect.

(b) The program must:

1           (1) be designed to coordinate with community-based  
2 organizations to provide prevention services;

3           (2) include a prevention component and an early  
4 intervention component;

5           (3) include collaboration with services for child  
6 welfare, services for early childhood education, and other child  
7 and family services programs; and

8           (4) coordinate with the community collaboration  
9 initiative developed under Subchapter I, Chapter 434, Government  
10 Code, and committees formed by local communities as part of that  
11 initiative.

12           (c) The program must be established initially as a pilot  
13 program in areas of the state in which the department considers the  
14 implementation practicable. The department shall evaluate the  
15 outcomes of the pilot program and ensure that the program is  
16 producing positive results before implementing the program  
17 throughout the state.

18           (d) The department shall evaluate the program and prepare an  
19 annual report on the outcomes of the program. The department shall  
20 publish the report on the department's Internet website.

21           SECTION 2. Chapter 434, Government Code, is amended by  
22 adding Subchapters H and I to read as follows:

23           SUBCHAPTER H. STATEWIDE COORDINATION OF MENTAL HEALTH

24                           PROGRAM FOR VETERANS

25           Sec. 434.351. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

26           (1) "Commission" means the Texas Veterans Commission.

27           (2) "Peer" means a person who is a veteran or a

1 veteran's family member.

2 (3) "Veteran" means a person who has served in:

3 (A) the army, navy, air force, coast guard, or  
4 marine corps of the United States;

5 (B) the state military forces as defined by  
6 Section 431.001; or

7 (C) an auxiliary service of one of those branches  
8 of the armed forces.

9 (4) "Volunteer coordinator" means a person who  
10 recruits and retains veterans, peers, and volunteers to participate  
11 in the mental health program for veterans and related activities.

12 Sec. 434.352. DUTIES. (a) The commission and the  
13 Department of State Health Services shall coordinate to administer  
14 the mental health program for veterans developed under Chapter  
15 1001, Health and Safety Code.

16 (b) For the mental health program for veterans, the  
17 commission shall:

18 (1) provide training to volunteer coordinators and  
19 peers in accordance with Section 434.353;

20 (2) provide technical assistance to volunteer  
21 coordinators and peers;

22 (3) recruit, train, and communicate with  
23 community-based therapists, community-based organizations, and  
24 faith-based organizations; and

25 (4) coordinate services for justice involved  
26 veterans.

27 (c) The executive director of the commission shall appoint a

1 program director to administer the mental health program for  
2 veterans.

3 (d) The commission shall provide appropriate facilities in  
4 support of the mental health program for veterans to the extent  
5 funding is available for that purpose.

6 Sec. 434.353. TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION. (a) The  
7 commission shall develop and implement methods for providing  
8 volunteer coordinator certification training to volunteer  
9 coordinators, including providing training for initial  
10 certification and recertification and providing continuing  
11 education.

12 (b) The commission shall manage and coordinate the peer  
13 training program to include initial training, advanced training,  
14 certification, and continuing education for peers associated with  
15 the mental health program for veterans.

16 SUBCHAPTER I. COMMUNITY COLLABORATION INITIATIVE

17 Sec. 434.401. COMMUNITY COLLABORATION. (a) The commission  
18 and the Department of State Health Services shall include as a part  
19 of the mental health program for veterans described by Section  
20 434.352(a) an initiative to encourage local communities to conduct  
21 cross-sector collaboration to synchronize locally accessible  
22 resources available for veterans and military service members.

23 (b) The initiative must be designed to encourage local  
24 communities to form a committee that is tasked with developing a  
25 plan to identify and support the needs of veterans and military  
26 service members residing in their community. The commission may  
27 designate general areas of focus for the initiative.

1           SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives  
2 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as  
3 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this  
4 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this  
5 Act takes effect September 1, 2015.

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President of the Senate

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Speaker of the House

I certify that H.B. No. 19 was passed by the House on May 11, 2015, by the following vote: Yeas 131, Nays 5, 1 present, not voting.

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Chief Clerk of the House

I certify that H.B. No. 19 was passed by the Senate on May 24, 2015, by the following vote: Yeas 29, Nays 1.

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Secretary of the Senate

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_

Date

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Governor