

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 19
By: King, Susan
Defense & Veterans' Affairs
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The Military Veteran Peer Network trains volunteers to provide peer-to-peer counseling for veterans statewide. Interested parties believe that there is more to be done in coordinating and enhancing these services and in strengthening current efforts at the local community level to address the mental health needs of veterans. These parties have also expressed concern about the lack of preventive family crisis support services for veterans and military families. C.S.H.B. 19 seeks to address these concerns and help to enhance and strengthen mental health intervention services for veterans.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 19 amends the Human Resources Code to require the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) to 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 family violence or abuse or neglect. The bill requires the program to be designed to coordinate with community-based organizations to provide prevention services, to include a prevention component and an early intervention component, to include collaboration with services for child welfare, services for early childhood education, and other child and family services programs, and to coordinate with the community collaboration initiative developed under the bill's provisions and committees formed by local communities as part of that initiative. The bill authorizes the program to be established initially as a pilot program, at the discretion of DFPS, in areas of Texas in which DFPS considers the implementation practicable. The bill requires DFPS to evaluate the program and prepare an annual report on the outcomes of the program and to publish the report on the DFPS website.

C.S.H.B. 19 amends the Government Code to require the Texas Veterans Commission and the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) to coordinate to administer the mental health program for veterans developed under the Health and Safety Code. The bill requires the commission, in administering the program, to provide training and technical assistance to volunteer coordinators, defined by the bill as persons who recruit and retain veterans, peers, and volunteers to participate in the mental health program and related activities, and peers, defined by the bill as persons who are veterans or family members of veterans; to recruit, train, and communicate with community-based therapists, community-based organizations, and faith-based

organizations; and to coordinate services for justice involved veterans. The bill sets out provisions relating to volunteer training and certification and peer training and continuing education. The bill requires the commission to develop and implement the volunteer training and certification methods and to manage and coordinate the peer training and continuing education.

C.S.H.B. 19 requires the executive director of the commission to appoint a program director to administer the mental health program for veterans and requires the commission to provide appropriate facilities in support of the program to the extent funding is available for that purpose. The bill requires the commission and DSHS to include as a part of the mental health program for veterans an initiative to encourage local communities to conduct cross-sector collaboration to synchronize locally accessible resources available for veterans and military service members. The bill requires the initiative to be designed to encourage local communities to form a committee that is tasked with developing a plan to identify and support the needs of veterans and military service members residing in their community. The bill authorizes the commission to designate general areas of focus for the initiative.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2015.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 19 may differ from the original in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following comparison is organized and formatted in a manner that indicates the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

INTRODUCED

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

CHAPTER 53. PREVENTION SERVICES FOR VETERANS' AND MILITARY FAMILIES

Sec. 53.001. DEFINITIONS.

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

(2) include a home-visiting program component;

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

HOUSE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE

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

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(1) family violence; or

(2) abuse or neglect.

(b) The program must:

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

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

(4) include collaboration with services for child welfare, early childhood education, and other child and family services programs; and

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

(c) The program may be established initially as a pilot program, at the discretion of the department, in areas of the state in which the department considers the implementation practicable.

No equivalent provision.

Sec. 53.003. INFORMATION COORDINATION. The department shall undertake to automate and upgrade computerized research systems and database systems for the purposes of prevention and early intervention components of the program established under Section 53.002, including coordination and data matching with the Department of State Health Services.

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

SUBCHAPTER H. STATEWIDE COORDINATION OF THE MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM FOR VETERANS
Sec. 434.351. DEFINITIONS.

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

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

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

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

(3) recruit, train, and communicate with

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

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

(c) The program may be established initially as a pilot program, at the discretion of the department, in areas of the state in which the department considers the implementation practicable.

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

No equivalent provision.

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

SUBCHAPTER H. STATEWIDE COORDINATION OF MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM FOR VETERANS
Sec. 434.351. DEFINITIONS.

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

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

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

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

(3) recruit, train, and communicate with

community-based therapists, community-based organizations, and faith-based organizations; and

(4) coordinate services for justice involved veterans.

(c) The executive director of the commission shall appoint a program director to administer the mental health program for veterans.

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

Sec. 434.353. TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION.

SUBCHAPTER I. COMMUNITY COLLABORATION INITIATIVE

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

(b) The initiative must be designed to encourage local communities to form a committee that is tasked with developing a plan to identify and support the needs of veterans and military services members residing in their community.

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

community-based therapists, community-based organizations, and faith-based organizations; and

(4) coordinate services for justice involved veterans.

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

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