

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

S.B. 1463  
By: Lucio  
Defense & Veterans' Affairs  
Committee Report (Unamended)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

Interested parties note that, despite the fact that the Rio Grande Valley region is home to nearly 100,000 veterans, the region has some of the worst wait times for veteran health care services. It is further noted that veterans often must travel over 200 miles to San Antonio to the closest U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs hospital for specialty care. The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley recently established a medical school in the region and a hospital equipped with state-of-the-art technology. The parties assert that these resources can be leveraged to lay the foundation for a robust veterans hospital that can meet the complex needs of veterans. S.B. 1463 seeks to provide a means of conveniently and more efficiently delivering health care services to 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**

S.B. 1463 amends the Government Code to authorize the governor or the governor's designee to negotiate with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and any other appropriate federal agency on matters relating to improving the delivery of health care services to veterans in Texas, including establishing a veterans hospital in the Rio Grande Valley region and ensuring the prompt payment of claims submitted by community health care providers to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs for health care services provided to veterans by those providers. The bill authorizes the governor, in consultation with the board of regents of The University of Texas System, to identify shared resources and collaborative opportunities that may be used by the School of Medicine at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to provide quality health care services to residents of the Rio Grande Valley. The bill authorizes the governor to request the assistance of the Department of State Health Services (DSHS), the Health and Human Services Commission, the Texas Veterans Commission, or any other state agency, department, or office in performing an action under the bill's provisions relating to veterans health issues and requires the agency, department, or office to provide the requested assistance. The bill specifies, for purposes of the statutory requirement that the Texas Veterans Commission and DSHS work with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and any other appropriate federal agency to propose that the federal government establish a veterans hospital in the Rio Grande Valley region, that the commission's and DSHS's work with those entities is performed in collaboration with the office of the governor.

**EFFECTIVE DATE**

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