

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 429
By: Lucio
Public Health
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Meeting the needs of Texans suffering from mental health and substance abuse issues requires a robust and diverse workforce of qualified mental health and behavioral health professionals. Reports indicate that the state faces critical shortages for many licensed mental health professionals, but it has been noted that various state and federal legislative initiatives, agency reports, and advocacy efforts have offered recommendations for addressing workforce challenges across the various mental health and behavioral health disciplines. S.B. 429 seeks to integrate these reports and recommendations to create a plan to increase and improve the workforce in Texas that serves persons with mental health and substance use issues.

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. 429 amends the Government Code to require the statewide behavioral health coordinating council, under the direction of the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), to develop, and HHSC to implement, a comprehensive plan to increase and improve the workforce in Texas to serve persons with mental health and substance use issues and, in developing the plan, to analyze and consider available studies, reports, and recommendations regarding that segment of the workforce in Texas or elsewhere. The bill requires the plan to include a strategy and timeline for implementing the plan, a system for monitoring the implementation of the plan, and a method for evaluating the outcomes of the plan. The bill requires the statewide behavioral health coordinating council to develop, and HHSC to begin implementing, the plan not later than September 1, 2020.

S.B. 429 requires the statewide behavioral health coordinating council and HHSC to implement a provision of the bill only if the legislature appropriates money to HHSC specifically for that purpose. If the legislature does not make such an appropriation, the council and HHSC may, but are not required to, implement the provision using other appropriations that are available for that purpose.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2019.