

SUBJECT: Establishing peer specialists under the medical assistance program

COMMITTEE: Human Services — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 5 ayes — Raymond, Rose, Keough, Naishtat, Peña

0 nays

4 absent — S. King, Klick, Price, Spitzer

WITNESSES: For — Bill Kelly, Mental Health America of Greater Houston; Lee Johnson, Texas Council of Community Centers; Paul Eisenhauer, Texas State Employees Union; Michele Bibby; Christina Carney; Andrea Marz; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Albert Metz, ADAPT; Cynthia Humphrey, Association of Substance Abuse Programs; Katharine Ligon, Center for Public Policy Priorities; Dennis Borel, Coalition of Texans with Disabilities; Robin Peyson, Communities for Recovery; Sarah Watkins and Joe Tate, Community Now; Kathryn Lewis, Disability Rights Texas; Tanya Lavelle, Easter Seals Central Texas; Shaun Bickley, Imagine Enterprises; Coby Chase, Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute; Cate Graziani, Mental Health America of Texas; Laura Austin and Greg Hansch, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Texas; Will Francis, National Association of Social Workers-Texas Chapter; Jason Howell, Soberhood; Duane Galligher, Texas Association of Addiction Professionals; Shelby Massey, Texas Association of Community Health Centers; Douglas Smith, Texas Criminal Justice Coalition; Stacy Wilson, Texas Hospital Association; Michelle Romero, Texas Medical Association; Harrison Hiner, Texas State Employees Union; Conrad John, Travis County Commissioners Court; Melody Chatelle, United Ways of Texas; Marilyn Hartman; Lauren Johnson; Linda Litzinger; Deborah Rosales Elkinsl)

Against — None

On — Sonja Gaines, Health and Human Services Commission; Colleen Horton, Hogg Foundation for Mental Health; Tamela Griffin; (*Registered,*

*but did not testify*: Robyn Strickland, Department of State Health Services)

**BACKGROUND:** Peer support services are based on an evidence-based mental health care model in which a qualified peer support provider helps individuals with recovery from mental illness and substance use conditions. Texas has a process for certifying mental health and substance use peer specialists. Peer support services do not replace other mental health services but are believed to reduce the frequency of more expensive services.

**DIGEST:** CSHB 1541 would amend the Human Resources Code to require the Health and Human Services Commission to include peer services provided by certified peer specialists under Medicaid to the extent permitted by federal law. The commission would have to establish a separate provider type for peer specialists for purposes of enrollment as providers of and reimbursement under Medicaid.

The bill also would amend the Government Code to adopt rules and standards governing peer specialists. With input from peer specialists, state-approved organizations that certify peer specialists, and other relevant stakeholders, the Health and Human Services Commission would develop and the executive commissioner would adopt:

- rules to establish training requirements for peer specialists;
- rules that establish certification and supervision requirements for peer specialists;
- rules that define the scope of services peer specialists may provide;
- rules that distinguish peer services from other services that a person must hold a license to provide; and
- any other rules necessary to protect the health and safety of persons receiving peer services.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2015.

NOTES: The Legislative Budget Board estimates that the bill would have a negative fiscal impact of \$1.6 million through fiscal 2016-17.