

SUBJECT: Adding to non-physician mental health professional definition

COMMITTEE: Human Services — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 7 ayes — Raymond, Rose, Keough, Klick, Naishtat, Peña, Price

1 nay — Spitzer

1 absent — S. King

WITNESSES: For — Catherine Judd, Texas Academy of Physician Assistants; Danette Castle, Texas Council of Community Centers; Mary Hennigan, Texas Occupational Therapy Association; Constance Daby; Claudette Fette; Sandra Whisner; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Hillary Clearman; Robin Clearman; Richard Ericksen; Michael Gutierrez; Betti Toone)

Against — Carol Grothues, Texas Psychological Association; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Jan Friese, Texas Counseling Association; David White, Texas Psychological Association)

On — Kerry Raymond, Department of State Health Services

BACKGROUND: Health and Safety Code, sec. 571.003(15) defines non-physician mental health professional to include certain psychologists, registered nurses, clinical social workers, professional counselors, and marriage or family therapists. Occupations Code, sec. 454.006 describes the practice of occupational therapy.

Licensed occupational therapists offer services that may help those who suffer from mental illness and other conditions, and some believe they can play role in addressing the mental health professional shortage in the state.

DIGEST: CSHB 1998 would add occupational therapists licensed to practice in Texas to the definition of a non-physician mental health professional. The bill would not authorize an occupational therapist to perform diagnosis or psychological services of the type typically performed by a licensed

psychologist.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2015.