

SUBJECT: Requiring higher education institutions to link to mental health resources

COMMITTEE: Public Health — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 10 ayes — Price, Sheffield, Arévalo, Burkett, Coleman, Cortez, Guerra, Klick, Oliverson, Zedler

0 nays

1 absent — Collier

WITNESSES: For — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Cynthia Humphrey, Association of Substance Abuse Programs; Bill Kelly, City of Houston Mayor's Office; Reginald Smith, Communities for Recovery; Kathryn Lewis, Disability Rights Texas; Eric Woomer, Federation of Texas Psychiatry; Gyl Switzer, Mental Health America of Texas; Christine Yanas, Methodist Healthcare Ministries; Greg Hansch, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Texas; Eric Kunish, National Alliance on Mental Illness Austin Advocacy Chair; Will Francis, National Association of Social Workers - Texas Chapter; Josette Saxton, Texans Care for Children; Marshall Kenderdine, Texas Academy of Family Physicians; Lee Johnson, Texas Council of Community Centers; Jan Friese, Texas Counseling Association; Aidan Utzman, United Ways of Texas; Aliyah Ali; Rajitha Reddy)

Against — None

BACKGROUND: Education Code, sec. 51.9193 requires public higher education institutions to create and maintain a web page on their website devoted solely to available mental health resources for students at the institution in addition to the address of the nearest local mental health authority.

DIGEST: HB 2895 would direct public higher education institutions to incorporate on the web page required under Education Code, sec. 51.9193 available mental health resources regardless of whether the resources were provided by the institution. Each institution would have to maintain a conspicuous link on the institution's website home page to the mental health resources

web page. Institutions would have to comply with these requirements by December 1, 2017.

By August 1 of each year, the president or a designee of an institution would certify to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board the institution's compliance with the bill's provisions.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2017.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

HB 2895 would strengthen enforcement of current law by requiring a conspicuous link on the public higher education institution's website home page to the web page dedicated to mental health services available to students. This would increase student awareness of accessible mental health resources, which could decrease college dropout rates. Some surveys report about two-thirds of former college students are no longer attending college because of a mental health condition. The bill would ensure that noncompliant institutions met the required posting of mental health resources.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

No apparent opposition.