

- SUBJECT:** Expedited licensure for certain physicians specializing in psychiatry
- COMMITTEE:** Public Health — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 10 ayes — Price, Sheffield, Arévalo, Burkett, Coleman, Collier, Cortez, Guerra, Klick, Oliverson
- 0 nays
- 1 absent — Zedler
- SENATE VOTE:** On final passage, March 20 — 30-0
- WITNESSES:** For — Greg Hansch, National Alliance on Mental Illness Texas; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Melissa Shannon, Bexar County Commissioners Court; Eric Woomer, Federation of Texas Psychiatry; Nelson Jarrin, Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute; Gyl Switzer, Mental Health America of Texas; Sebastien Laroche, Methodist Healthcare Ministries of South Texas, Inc.; Eric Kunish, National Alliance on Mental Illness Austin; Jessica Schleifer, Teaching Hospitals of Texas; Lee Johnson, Texas Council of Community Centers; Marcus Mitias, Texas Health Resources; Jennifer Banda, Texas Hospital Association; Andrew Smith, University Health System; Belinda Carlton)
- Against — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Kristi Morrison)
- BACKGROUND:** Occupations Code, ch. 155 establishes licensure requirements for physicians to practice medicine in Texas. Sec. 155.003(e) states an applicant is ineligible for a license if:
- the applicant holds a medical license that currently is restricted, canceled, or suspended for cause, or revoked;
 - an investigation or a proceeding is instituted against the applicant for the restriction, cancellation, suspension, or revocation; or
 - a prosecution is pending against the applicant in any state, federal, or Canadian court for any offense that under the state's laws is a

felony or a misdemeanor that involves moral turpitude.

Observers have noted that Texas faces a severe shortage of psychiatrists. They contend that an expedited licensing process for out-of-state psychiatrists would improve access to mental health services.

DIGEST: SB 674 would require the Texas Medical Board to create an expedited licensing process for an applicant who:

- held an unrestricted license issued by another state to practice medicine;
- was board certified in psychiatry by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology or the American Osteopathic Board of Neurology and Psychiatry; and
- was not ineligible under Occupations Code, sec. 155.003(e).

The process would have to include a screening procedure to determine an applicant's eligibility for expedited licensure.

The bill would prohibit the requirements to renew a registration permit for an expedited license holder from being more stringent than the requirements for a non-expedited license holder. The bill would allow TMB to establish a fee for the expedited licensure process. The bill's provisions would expire January 1, 2022.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2017, and would require the medical board to implement the expedited licensure process by January 1, 2018.