

- SUBJECT:** Adding certain mental health recommendations to an annual report
- COMMITTEE:** Public Health — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 11 ayes — S. Thompson, Wray, Allison, Coleman, Frank, Guerra, Lucio, Ortega, Price, Sheffield, Zedler
- 0 nays
- SENATE VOTE:** On final passage, April 9 — 30-1 (Buckingham)
- WITNESSES:** For — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Marisa Finley, Baylor Scott & White Health; Christine Yanas, Methodist Healthcare Ministries of South Texas; Greg Hansch and Alissa Sughrue, National Alliance on Mental Illness Texas; Eric Kunish, National Alliance on Mental Illness Austin; Kevin Stewart, Texas Nurse Practitioners, Texas Psychological Association; Richard Perez, The San Antonio Chamber of Commerce; and 12 individuals)
- Against — None
- On — (*Registered, but did not testify:* John Monk, Health Professions Council)
- BACKGROUND:** Occupations Code sec. 101.151 requires the Health Professions Council to prepare an annual report compiling enforcement actions taken by the health profession regulatory boards of the state, recommendations for improving regulatory statute, and any other information deemed necessary by the council. The report must be sent to the governor, lieutenant governor, and House speaker by February 1 of each year.
- DIGEST:** SB 1636 would expand the requirements of the annual Health Professions Council report to include strategies to expand the health care workforce in Texas. These strategies would include:
- methods for reducing the time required to process license

- applications for health care professions;
- methods for increasing the number of mental and behavioral health care practitioners; and
 - recommendations for statutory and legislative appropriations to expand the health care workforce, including in areas that are medically underserved.

The bill would add the chairs of the House and Senate standing committees with primary jurisdiction over public health and state finance or appropriations to the list of report recipients.

A report that included only the strategies specified in the bill's provisions would be due to the above recipients by June 1, 2020. The council would not be required to include the bill's provisions in its full reporting until February 1, 2021.

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, 2019.