

SUBJECT: Requiring development of a plan to increase behavioral health workforce

COMMITTEE: Public Health — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 10 ayes — S. Thompson, Wray, Allison, Frank, Guerra, Lucio, Ortega,
Price, Sheffield, Zedler

0 nays

1 absent — Coleman

SENATE VOTE: On final passage, May 2 — 27-4 (Hall, Hughes, Nelson, Schwertner)

WITNESSES: *On House companion bill, HB 1669:*
For — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Cynthia Humphrey, Association of Substance Abuse Programs; Jo DePrang, Children's Defense Fund - Texas; Christina Hoppe, Children's Hospital Association of Texas; Chris Masey, Coalition of Texans with Disabilities; Tim Schauer, Community Health Choice; Kennedi Wilson, Doctors for Change; Christine Yanas, Methodist Healthcare Ministries of South Texas, Inc.; Julia Egler and Greg Hansch, National Alliance on Mental Illness Texas; Will Francis, National Association of Social Workers - Texas; Josette Saxton, Texans Care for Children; Marshall Kenderdine, Texas Academy of Family Physicians; Windy Johnson, Texas Conference of Urban Counties; Lee Johnson, Texas Council of Community Centers; Reginald Smith, Texas Criminal Justice Coalition; Cameron Duncan, Texas Hospital Association; Chris Frandsen, Texas League Of Women Voters; Michelle Romero, Texas Medical Association; Lee Nichols, TexProtects - Champions for Safe Children; Nataly Saucedo, United Ways of Texas; and about 29 individuals)

Against — None

On — Colleen Horton, Hogg Foundation for Mental Health; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Carissa Dougherty and Trina Ita, Health and Human Services Commission; Tanya Lavelle, Hogg Foundation for Mental

Health)

BACKGROUND: Some have suggested creating a plan to increase and improve the state's behavioral health workforce to better address the needs of Texans suffering from mental health and substance abuse issues.

DIGEST: SB 429 would require the Statewide Behavioral Health Coordinating Council, under the direction of the Health and Human Services Commission, to develop a comprehensive plan to increase and improve the workforce in Texas to serve individuals with mental health and substance use issues. HHSC would have to implement the plan.

To develop the plan, the council would have to analyze and consider available studies, reports, and recommendations on that segment of the workforce in Texas or elsewhere. The plan would have to include:

- a strategy and timeline for implementing the plan, including short-, medium-, and long-term goals;
- a system for monitoring the plan's implementation; and
- a method for evaluating the plan's outcomes.

By September 1, 2020, the council would have to develop and HHSC would have to begin implementing the plan.

The council and HHSC would be required to implement provisions of the bill only if the Legislature appropriated money specifically for that purpose.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2019.