

**SUBJECT:** Requiring HHSC to conduct a study on recovery housing needs

**COMMITTEE:** Public Health — favorable, without amendment

**VOTE:** 11 ayes — Klick, Guerra, Allison, Campos, Coleman, Collier, Jetton, Oliverson, Price, Smith, Zwiener

0 nays

**WITNESSES:** For — Sheila Hemphill, Texas Right to Know; Elizabeth Henry; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Matthew Lovitt, National Alliance on Mental Illness Texas; Alison Mohr Boleware, National Association of Social Workers - Texas Chapter; Lee Johnson, Texas Council of Community Centers; Devin Driver, Texas Criminal Justice Coalition; Ashley Harris, United Ways of Texas)

Against — None

On — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Lisa Ramirez, Health and Human Services Commission)

**DIGEST:** HB 707 would require the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to conduct a study to evaluate the current status of recovery housing and the opportunities, challenges, and needs to expand recovery housing in Texas. The bill would define "recovery housing" as a shared living environment that promoted sustained recovery from substance use disorders by integrating residents into the surrounding community and providing a setting that connected residents to supports and services that promoted sustained recovery from substance use disorders, was centered on peer support, and was free from alcohol and drug use.

In conducting the recovery housing study, HHSC would have to:

- identify and evaluate state and federal regulatory deficiencies and potential impacts on recovery housing, including impacts on local government resources and interests of surrounding communities;

- create focus groups with interested community stakeholders;
- interview stakeholders and experts in recovery housing that represented both rural and urban areas;
- conduct certain site visits to recovery houses demonstrating different models of recovery housing in both rural and urban areas;  
and
- review scholarly research.

By December 1, 2022, HHSC would have to submit a report to the Legislature that contained the results of the study and any recommendations for legislative or other actions, including policy changes and the adoption or implementation of best practices and training and technical assistance resources.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2021, and its provisions would expire September 1, 2023.

**SUPPORTERS  
SAY:**

HB 707 would help identify gaps in recovery housing and support services by directing the Health and Human Services Commission to conduct a study on recovery housing in Texas. The prevalence of substance use disorders in this state creates a clear need to expand the availability of recovery supports, including recovery housing, a community-based housing model that can help people concentrate on treatment in a substance abuse-free environment while accessing peer support services. However, the availability and quality of recovery housing is largely unknown, which hinders the ability of state and local governments to make informed policy decisions and support Texans recovering from substance use disorders. HB 707 would provide a more accurate understanding of recovery housing in Texas and enable the Legislature to make strategic policy decisions in the future.

By identifying gaps in recovery housing, the bill could lead to greater use of this recovery support, which would help save lives, reconnect families, and increase the well-being of Texans affected by substance abuse. The report's findings also could lead to more cost efficient and effective ways to provide individuals in recovery from substance use with supportive

living environments.

CRITICS  
SAY:

HB 707 would require the Health and Human Services Commission to include recommended legislative actions in its submitted report, which could lead to an expansion of state regulation of and funding for recovery housing programs.