

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
79R16671 CME-D

S.C.R. 37
By: Staples
Health & Human Services
5/18/2005
As Filed

AUTHOR'S/SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

In 2002, President George W. Bush announced the creation of the New Freedom Commission on Mental Health; the commission was charged to study the mental health delivery system and make recommendations aimed at helping Americans overcome the stigma surrounding mental illnesses, the unfair restrictions on treatment and financial requirements associated with mental health benefits in private health insurance policies, and the fragmentation of service delivery.

The commission's final report, submitted to the president in July 2003, presented a stark analysis of mental health in the United States; the commission concluded that mental illness is common and often untreated, that there is need for greater coordination between mental health care providers and primary health care providers, that the mental health system overwhelms many consumers and underserves minority populations, and that there is too lengthy a delay before advances in research reach actual practice.

Regrettably, Texas is not immune to many of the challenges to effective delivery of mental health care; in 2002, the United States Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) identified 3.1 million adults and 1.2 million Texas children who suffered from some form of diagnosable mental health disorder, yet the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation was able to serve only an estimated 26 percent of eligible children and 38 percent of eligible adults in that same year.

In response to the commission's findings, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration of DHHS developed the Mental Health Transformation State Incentive Grant program to support a range of infrastructure and service delivery improvements and build a solid foundation for delivering and sustaining effective mental health and related services.

Recognizing the need to provide high-quality mental health care services and eliminate the current fragmented system of delivery for those services, Governor Rick Perry has applied for the Mental Health Transformation State Incentive Grant; this endeavor is in keeping with the legislature's dedication to maximizing all available resources to provide the best possible care to the citizens of this state, and it is appropriate to support the governor's effort at this time.

RESOLVED

That the 79th Legislature of the State of Texas express its support for the governor's application to the United States Department of Health and Human Services for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's Mental Health Transformation State Incentive Grant.