

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center

H.B. 19  
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Veteran Affairs & Military Installations  
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Engrossed

### **AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT**

H.B. 19 seeks to strengthen the Military Veteran Peer Network (MVPN) of the Texas Veterans Commission and the Department of State Health Services by enhancing mental health intervention services for veterans. It also requires the Department of Family and Protective Services to establish preventative family crisis support services for veterans and military families. Additionally, the bill requires the state to support local collaboration of both mental health services and preventative family crisis support services.

H.B. 19 amends current law relating to a preventive services program and mental health programs for veterans and military families.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

### **SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS**

SECTION 1. Amends Subtitle E, Title 2, Human Resources Code, by adding Chapter 53, as follows:

#### **CHAPTER 53. PREVENTIVE SERVICES FOR VETERANS AND MILITARY FAMILIES**

Sec. 53.001. DEFINITIONS. Defines “department” and “veteran.”

Sec. 53.002. VETERANS AND MILITARY FAMILIES PREVENTIVE SERVICES PROGRAM. (a) Requires the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) to develop and implement a preventive services program (program) to serve veterans and military families who have committed or experienced or who are at a high risk of:

- (1) family violence; or
- (2) abuse or neglect.

(b) Requires that the program:

- (1) be designed to coordinate with community-based organizations to provide prevention services;
- (2) include a prevention component and an early intervention component;
- (3) include collaboration with services for child welfare, services for early childhood education, and other child and family services programs; and
- (4) coordinate with the community collaboration initiative developed under Subchapter I, Chapter 434, Government Code, and committees formed by local communities as part of that initiative.

(c) Requires that the program be established initially as a pilot program in areas of the state in which DFPS considers the implementation practicable. Requires DFPS to evaluate the outcomes of the pilot program and ensure that the program is producing positive results before implementing the program throughout the state.

(d) Requires DFPS to evaluate the program and prepare an annual report on the outcomes of the program. Requires DFPS to publish the report on DFPS's Internet website.

SECTION 2. Amends Chapter 434, Government Code, by adding Subchapters H and I, as follows:

#### SUBCHAPTER H. STATEWIDE COORDINATION OF MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM FOR VETERANS

Sec. 434.351. DEFINITIONS. Defines “commission,” “peer,” “veteran,” and “volunteer coordinator.”

Sec. 434.352. DUTIES. (a) Requires the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) and the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) to coordinate to administer the mental health program for veterans developed under Chapter 1001 (Department of State Health Services), Health and Safety Code.

(b) Requires TVC, for the mental health program for veterans, to:

(1) provide training to volunteer coordinators and peers in accordance with Section 434.353;

(2) provide technical assistance to volunteer coordinators and peers;

(3) recruit, train, and communicate with community-based therapists, community-based organizations, and faith-based organizations; and

(4) coordinate services for justice involved veterans.

(c) Requires the executive director of TVC to appoint a program director to administer the mental health program for veterans.

(d) Requires TVC to provide appropriate facilities in support of the mental health program for veterans to the extent funding is available for that purpose.

Sec. 434.353. TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION. (a) Requires TVC to develop and implement methods for providing volunteer coordinator certification training to volunteer coordinators, including providing training for initial certification and recertification and providing continuing education.

(b) Requires TVC to manage and coordinate the peer training program to include initial training, advanced training, certification, and continuing education for peers associated with the mental health program for veterans.

#### SUBCHAPTER I. COMMUNITY COLLABORATION INITIATIVE

Sec. 434.401. COMMUNITY COLLABORATION. (a) Requires TVC and DSHS to include as a part of the mental health program for veterans described by Section 434.352(a) an initiative to encourage local communities to conduct cross-sector collaboration to synchronize locally accessible resources available for veterans and military service members.

(b) Requires that the initiative be designed to encourage local communities to form a committee that is tasked with developing a plan to identify and support the needs of veterans and military service members residing in their community. Authorizes TVC to designate general areas of focus for the initiative.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2015.