

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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C.S.H.B. 3083
By: Price et al. (Hinojosa)
Higher Education
5/19/2017
Committee Report (Substituted)

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Texas suffers from a severe lack of mental health professionals, leaving an estimated 25 million Texans without the health care that they need. H.B. 3083 makes two changes.

1. It adds licensed chemical dependency counselors to the Mental Health Loan Repayment Program.
2. It strikes the word "one" in the eligibility section of the loan program, therefore requiring a minimum of two years of service in order to be eligible for loan forgiveness.

Currently, psychiatrists, psychologists, licensed clinical social workers, licensed professional counselors, and advanced practice nurses certified in psychiatric or mental health nursing, are eligible to receive loan repayment assistance through this program if they commit to working with Medicaid or CHIP patients or incarcerated individuals with mental health needs and work in medically underserved areas.

However, the program is not currently available to those who seek specified training in addiction. Over the course of the interim, the Select Committee on Mental Health discussed addiction and recovery and how the opioid crisis is driving the need for more professionals with addiction training.

Licensed chemical dependency counselors receive in-depth education and training specific to addressing drug and alcohol addiction, but Texas also has a shortage of these professionals. (Original Author's / Sponsor's Statement of Intent)

C.S.H.B. 3083 amends current law relating to repayment of certain mental health professional education loans.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in SECTION 4 (Section 61.608, Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 61.601, Education Code, to redefine "mental health professional" to include a chemical dependency counselor, as defined by Section 504.001 (Definitions), Occupations Code.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 61.604, Education Code, by adding Subsection (d), as follows:

- (d) Authorizes the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), if in a state fiscal year not all funds available for the purposes of the repayment assistance program for certain mental health professionals (program) are used, to allocate any unused funds to award repayment assistance grants to mental health professionals listed in Section 61.601 (Definition). Provides that the limitations prescribed by Subsections (b) (relating to a maximum of 10 percent of the number of repayment assistance grants paid being awarded to mental health professionals providing certain services) and (c) (relating to a

maximum of 30 percent of the number of repayment assistance grants paid being awarded to mental health professionals) do not apply to grants awarded under this subsection.

SECTION 3. Amends Section 61.607(b), Education Code, as follows:

(b) Prohibits the total amount of repayment assistance received by a mental health professional under this subchapter from exceeding:

(1) \$160,000, for assistance from the state received by, rather than for assistance received by, a licensed physician;

(2) through (4) makes conforming changes; and

(5) \$10,000, for assistance from the state received by a licensed chemical dependency counselor, if the chemical dependency counselor has received an associate degree related to chemical dependency counseling or behavioral science.

SECTION 4. Amends Section 61.608, Education Code, by adding Subsection (c), to require THECB to adopt rules establishing a process for allocating any unused funds under the program in accordance with Section 61.604(d).

SECTION 5. Effective date: September 1, 2017.