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H.B. No. 2233

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT

2 relating to required mental health awareness training for first
3 responders.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

5 SECTION 1. Subtitle B, Title 9, Health and Safety Code, is
6 amended by adding Chapter 786 to read as follows:

7 CHAPTER 786. MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS TRAINING

8 FOR FIRST RESPONDERS

9 Sec. 786.001. DEFINITIONS. In this chapter:

10 (1) "Extension service" means the Texas A&M
11 Engineering Extension Service.

12 (2) "First responder" means a public safety employee
13 whose duties include responding rapidly to an emergency. The term
14 includes:

15 (A) a peace officer whose duties include
16 responding rapidly to an emergency;

17 (B) fire protection personnel as defined by
18 Section 419.021, Government Code;

19 (C) an individual certified as emergency medical
20 services personnel by the Department of State Health Services;

21 (D) an emergency response operator or emergency
22 services dispatcher who provides communication support services
23 for an agency by responding to requests for assistance in
24 emergencies, including a telecommunicator as defined by Section

1 1701.001, Occupations Code; and

2 (E) other emergency response personnel employed
3 by a state agency.

4 (3) "First responder training program" means a program
5 that provides training required for certification or licensure as a
6 first responder, including the training required under:

7 (A) Chapter 773;

8 (B) Chapter 419, Government Code; and

9 (C) Chapter 1701, Occupations Code.

10 Sec. 786.002. MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS TRAINING REQUIRED.

11 (a) A person who provides to first responders and first responder
12 trainees a first responder training program shall:

13 (1) include as part of the program at least six hours
14 of training on mental health awareness that covers:

15 (A) the most common mental health issues
16 experienced by first responders;

17 (B) the impact of chronic trauma on a first
18 responder's duties;

19 (C) signs and symptoms of mental illness; and

20 (D) strategies for first responders to attain
21 mental wellness and resiliency; and

22 (2) require first responders and first responder
23 trainees to successfully complete the training described by
24 Subdivision (1) as part of the training program.

25 (b) In providing the training described by Subsection (a), a
26 person who provides a first responder training program must use a
27 mental health awareness training curriculum developed or adopted

1 under Section 786.003.

2 Sec. 786.003. MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS TRAINING CURRICULUM.

3 (a) The Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service shall develop or
4 adopt a curriculum for the first responder mental health awareness
5 training required by Section 786.002. In developing or adopting
6 the curriculum, the extension service shall collaborate with state
7 agencies that certify or license first responders, including the
8 Texas Commission on Fire Protection, the Texas Commission on Law
9 Enforcement, and the Department of State Health Services.

10 (b) Each state agency that certifies or licenses first
11 responders shall ensure that the applicable first responder
12 training program required for certification or licensure as a first
13 responder uses the mental health awareness training curriculum
14 developed or adopted by the extension service under this section.

15 SECTION 2. Section 1701.253, Occupations Code, is amended
16 by adding Subsection (q) to read as follows:

17 (q) As part of the minimum curriculum requirements, the
18 commission shall require an officer to complete the mental health
19 awareness training curriculum developed or adopted by the Texas A&M
20 Engineering Extension Service under Section 786.003, Health and
21 Safety Code.

22 SECTION 3. Section 1701.3071, Occupations Code, is amended
23 by adding Subsection (a-2) to read as follows:

24 (a-2) The training required by Subsection (a)(2) must
25 include the mental health awareness training curriculum developed
26 or adopted by the Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service under
27 Section 786.003, Health and Safety Code.

1 SECTION 4. As soon as practicable after the effective date
2 of this Act:

3 (1) the Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service shall
4 develop or adopt the first responder mental health awareness
5 training curriculum required by Section 786.003, Health and Safety
6 Code, as added by this Act; and

7 (2) each state agency that certifies or licenses first
8 responders subject to Chapter 786, Health and Safety Code, as added
9 by this Act, shall ensure that:

10 (A) each first responder training program
11 subject to the chapter includes the mental health awareness
12 training and curriculum required by that chapter; and

13 (B) each first responder and first responder
14 trainee subject to the chapter completes the required training.

15 SECTION 5. This Act takes effect September 1, 2023.