

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 1490
By: Naishtat
Public Health
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Over 2,000 people in Texas die annually from suicide. Each year more people die from suicide than from homicide. The U.S. Surgeon General has asked all states to develop a suicide prevention plan. To date twenty states have created such a plan, Texas has not. Efforts to prevent suicide in Texas are scattered throughout the state. Currently there is no coordinated statewide approach to suicide prevention. HB 1490 attempts to develop and implement a statewide suicide prevention plan under the direction of the Health and Human Services Commission.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency or institution.

ANALYSIS

Section 1: Amends the Government Code, by adding Section 531.064, which requires the Texas Health and Human Services Commission to develop a statewide suicide prevention plan, and to establish a Suicide Prevention Council.

The makeup of the Suicide Prevention Council shall consist of an agency representative from the Texas Department on Aging, Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, the Texas Education Agency, Texas Department of Health, the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, and the Texas Health and Human Services Commission. The Commission shall appoint at least two members from the suicide prevention plan steering committee, one member of the governor's trauma advisory council, and two person who have lost a loved one to suicide to also serve on the council. The Commission may appoint any other person to the council that they consider appropriate.

Council members serve at the will of the Commission and are not entitled to compensation other than reasonable and necessary travel expenses incurred in attending meetings, subject to limitations on reimbursement provided by general law or the General Appropriations Act.

Requires the Commission and Council to consult the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention in developing a statewide plan.

Authorizes the Commission and any other state agency listed in the legislation to accept gifts, grants, and donations for the purpose of developing and implementing the plan, and authorizes the Commission to award grants to local, statewide public or private entities for the purpose of implementing the plan.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Upon passage, or, if the Act does not receive the necessary vote, the Act takes effect September 1, 2003.

