

By: Lucio

S.B. No. 1463

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the provision of information regarding health care and other benefits for veterans and their family members.

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

SECTION 1. Subchapter A, Chapter 434, Government Code, is amended by adding Section 434.019 to read as follows:

Sec. 434.019. INFORMATION ABOUT VETERANS BENEFITS. The Texas Veterans Commission shall, to the extent possible:

(1) attend each transition assistance program conducted by the United States Department of Defense in the state; and

(2) at each transition assistance program:

(A) distribute the application for health benefits from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs; and

(B) answer questions regarding health care and other benefits available to veterans of the United States armed forces.

SECTION 2. The heading to Section 531.093, Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 531.093. SERVICES FOR SERVICEMEMBERS AND FAMILY OF SERVICEMEMBERS [~~MILITARY PERSONNEL~~].

SECTION 3. Subsection (b), Section 531.093, Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

(b) The executive commissioner shall ensure that each

1 health and human services agency adopts policies and procedures  
2 that require the agency to:

3 (1) identify the following individuals  
4 [~~servicemembers~~] who are seeking services from the agency during  
5 the agency's intake and eligibility determination process:

6 (A) servicemembers;

7 (B) spouses of servicemembers;

8 (C) spouses of deceased servicemembers; and

9 (D) dependents of deceased servicemembers; and

10 (2) direct the individuals identified under  
11 Subdivision (1) [~~servicemembers seeking services~~] to appropriate  
12 service providers, including the United States Veterans Health  
13 Administration, National Guard Bureau facilities, and other  
14 federal, state, and local service providers.

15 SECTION 4. Subchapter U, Chapter 161, Health and Safety  
16 Code, is amended by adding Section 161.553 to read as follows:

17 Sec. 161.553. VETERANS HEALTH CARE BENEFITS. (a) The  
18 department and commission shall ensure that each individual who  
19 calls the Texas Information and Referral Network is informed that  
20 individuals who are servicemembers, spouses of servicemembers,  
21 spouses of deceased servicemembers, or dependents of deceased  
22 servicemembers may be entitled to medical and other benefits from  
23 the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, the National  
24 Guard Bureau, and other federal, state, and local service  
25 providers.

26 (b) The Texas Information and Referral Network shall  
27 provide the name and contact information of each entity that

1 provides benefits to which an individual described by Subsection  
2 (a) may be entitled.

3 (c) The Texas Veterans Commission shall cooperate with the  
4 department and commission in preparing and maintaining the  
5 information relating to referrals that is provided through the  
6 Texas Information and Referral Network, as provided by this  
7 section.

8 SECTION 5. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives  
9 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as  
10 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this  
11 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this  
12 Act takes effect September 1, 2009.