

By: Menendez, Moody

H.B. No. 3543

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to training, certification, and accreditation provided or regulated by the Texas Veterans Commission.

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

SECTION 1. Sections 434.038(d) and (e), Government Code, are amended to read as follows:

(d) The commission shall develop standard course materials, training curriculum, and examinations to be used for county service officer certification and United States Department of Veterans Affairs accreditation. ~~[The members of the commission must approve the course materials, training curriculum, and examinations before the commission may distribute the materials and administer examinations.]~~

(e) The commission shall:

(1) maintain course materials and examinations in a central location and provide county service offices and commission field staff with access to the course materials on the commission's Internet website;

(2) regularly update course materials, training curriculum, and examinations after consulting with:

(A) the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to ensure the course materials, training curriculum, and examinations are accurate and meet applicable United States Department of Veterans Affairs requirements; and

1 (B) accredited county service officers to ensure  
2 the materials, training curriculum, and examinations include  
3 issues developing at the county level; ~~and~~

4 (3) develop a training handbook containing  
5 instruction and case studies addressing:

6 (A) general assistance techniques, including how  
7 to provide general information regarding state and federal benefits  
8 and referrals for other services and to other agencies, and general  
9 information regarding state and federal benefits;

10 (B) basic counseling approaches for assisting  
11 veterans, their family members, and other eligible dependents  
12 filing benefit claims;

13 (C) basic information on United States  
14 Department of Veterans Affairs processes and procedures, including  
15 how to accurately complete claims and appeals forms and how to  
16 support claims;

17 (D) methods of collecting required documentation  
18 and developing claims and appeals;

19 (E) methods of documenting progress and updating  
20 a veteran's, a veteran's family member's, or another eligible  
21 dependent's case information;

22 (F) methods of assisting veterans, their family  
23 members, or other eligible dependents in pursuing appeals,  
24 including offering case knowledge in appeals hearings; and

25 (G) methods of representing veterans, their  
26 family members, or other eligible dependents during appeals  
27 hearings; and

1           (4) coordinate with the Department of State Health  
2 Services to incorporate a suicide prevention component as part of  
3 the accreditation training and examination.

4           SECTION 2. This Act takes effect September 1, 2013.