

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. Subsections (d) and (e), Section 434.038, 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.

\_\_\_\_\_  
President of the Senate

\_\_\_\_\_  
Speaker of the House

I hereby certify that S.B. No. 846 passed the Senate on April 11, 2013, by the following vote: Yeas 31, Nays 0.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary of the Senate

I hereby certify that S.B. No. 846 passed the House on April 25, 2013, by the following vote: Yeas 136, Nays 0, two present not voting.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief Clerk of the House

Approved:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Governor