AN ACT
relating to a preventive services program and mental health
programs for veterans and military families.
BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:
SECTION 1. Subtitle E, Title 2, Human Resources Code, is
amended by adding Chapter 53 to read as follows:
CHAPTER 53. PREVENTIVE SERVICES FOR VETERANS AND MILITARY FAMILIES
Sec. 53.001. DEFINITIONS. In this chapter:
(1) "Department" means the Department of Family and
Protective Services.
(2) "Veteran" means a person who has served in:
(A) the army, navy, air force, coast guard, or
marine corps of the United States;
(B) the state military forces as defined by
Section 431.001, Government Code; or
(C) an auxiliary service of one of those branches
of the armed forces.
Sec. 53.002. VETERANS AND MILITARY FAMILIES PREVENTIVE
SERVICES PROGRAM. (a) The department shall develop and implement a
preventive services program to serve veterans and military families
who have committed or experienced or who are at a high risk of:
(1) family violence; or
(2) abuse or neglect.
(b) The program must:
(1) be designed to coordinate with community-based organizations to provide prevention services;
(2) include a prevention component and an early intervention component;
(3) include collaboration with services for child welfare, services for early childhood education, and other child and family services programs; and
(4) coordinate with the community collaboration initiative developed under Subchapter I, Chapter 434, Government Code, and committees formed by local communities as part of that initiative.

(c) The program must be established initially as a pilot program in areas of the state in which the department considers the implementation practicable. The department shall evaluate the outcomes of the pilot program and ensure that the program is producing positive results before implementing the program throughout the state.

(d) The department shall evaluate the program and prepare an annual report on the outcomes of the program. The department shall publish the report on the department's Internet website.

SECTION 2. Chapter 434, Government Code, is amended by adding Subchapters H and I to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER H. STATEWIDE COORDINATION OF MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM FOR VETERANS

Sec. 434.351. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

(1) "Commission" means the Texas Veterans Commission.
(2) "Peer" means a person who is a veteran or a
veteran's family member.

(3) "Veteran" means a person who has served in:

(A) the army, navy, air force, coast guard, or marine corps of the United States;

(B) the state military forces as defined by Section 431.001; or

(C) an auxiliary service of one of those branches of the armed forces.

(4) "Volunteer coordinator" means a person who recruits and retains veterans, peers, and volunteers to participate in the mental health program for veterans and related activities.

Sec. 434.352. DUTIES. (a) The commission and the Department of State Health Services shall coordinate to administer the mental health program for veterans developed under Chapter 1001, Health and Safety Code.

(b) For the mental health program for veterans, the commission shall:

(1) provide training to volunteer coordinators and peers in accordance with Section 434.353;

(2) provide technical assistance to volunteer coordinators and peers;

(3) recruit, train, and communicate with community-based therapists, community-based organizations, and faith-based organizations; and

(4) coordinate services for justice involved veterans.

(c) The executive director of the commission shall appoint a
program director to administer the mental health program for veterans.

(d) The commission shall provide appropriate facilities in support of the mental health program for veterans to the extent funding is available for that purpose.

Sec. 434.353. TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION. (a) The commission shall develop and implement methods for providing volunteer coordinator certification training to volunteer coordinators, including providing training for initial certification and recertification and providing continuing education.

(b) The commission shall manage and coordinate the peer training program to include initial training, advanced training, certification, and continuing education for peers associated with the mental health program for veterans.

SUBCHAPTER I. COMMUNITY COLLABORATION INITIATIVE

Sec. 434.401. COMMUNITY COLLABORATION. (a) The commission and the Department of State Health Services shall include as a part of the mental health program for veterans described by Section 434.352(a) an initiative to encourage local communities to conduct cross-sector collaboration to synchronize locally accessible resources available for veterans and military service members.

(b) The initiative must be designed to encourage local communities to form a committee that is tasked with developing a plan to identify and support the needs of veterans and military service members residing in their community. The commission may designate general areas of focus for the initiative.
H.B. No. 19

SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2015.
H.B. No. 19

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President of the Senate       Speaker of the House

I certify that H.B. No. 19 was passed by the House on May 11, 2015, by the following vote: Yeas 131, Nays 5, 1 present, not voting.

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Chief Clerk of the House

I certify that H.B. No. 19 was passed by the Senate on May 24, 2015, by the following vote: Yeas 29, Nays 1.

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Secretary of the Senate

APPROVED: ______________________

Date

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Governor