

1-1 By: Otto, et al. (Senate Sponsor - Lucio) H.B. No. 1762
 1-2 (In the Senate - Received from the House May 5, 2015;
 1-3 May 6, 2015, read first time and referred to Committee on Veteran
 1-4 Affairs and Military Installations; May 15, 2015, reported
 1-5 favorably by the following vote: Yeas 5, Nays 0; May 15, 2015, sent
 1-6 to printer.)

1-7 COMMITTEE VOTE

	Yea	Nay	Absent	PNV
1-8				
1-9	X			
1-10			X	
1-11	X			
1-12	X			
1-13			X	
1-14	X			
1-15	X			

1-16 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
 1-17 AN ACT

1-18 relating to the creation of a health care advocacy program for
 1-19 veterans.

1-20 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

1-21 SECTION 1. Subchapter A, Chapter 434, Government Code, is
 1-22 amended by adding Section 434.023 to read as follows:

1-23 Sec. 434.023. HEALTH CARE ADVOCACY PROGRAM FOR VETERANS.

1-24 (a) In this section, "veteran" means a person who has served in:

1-25 (1) the army, navy, air force, coast guard, or marine
 1-26 corps of the United States; or

1-27 (2) the Texas National Guard as defined by Section
 1-28 431.001.

1-29 (b) The commission by rule shall establish and implement a
 1-30 health care advocacy program to assist veterans in gaining access
 1-31 to health care facilities of the United States Department of
 1-32 Veterans Affairs.

1-33 (c) The program shall provide assistance to veterans by:

1-34 (1) resolving any access issues raised by veterans in
 1-35 this state or referred to the commission by the veterans toll-free
 1-36 hotline operated under Section 161.077, Natural Resources Code;

1-37 (2) coordinating with the Veterans Health
 1-38 Administration of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs
 1-39 to support the health care advocacy program established under this
 1-40 section;

1-41 (3) coordinating with health care providers in this
 1-42 state to expand providers' opportunities to treat veterans through
 1-43 the United States Department of Veterans Affairs;

1-44 (4) reviewing and researching programs, projects, and
 1-45 initiatives designed to address the health care needs of veterans;

1-46 (5) evaluating the effectiveness of the efforts of the
 1-47 commission to improve access to health care services for veterans;

1-48 (6) making recommendations to the executive director
 1-49 of the commission to improve health care services and assistance
 1-50 for veterans;

1-51 (7) incorporating veterans' health care issues into
 1-52 the commission's strategic plan required under Section 2056.002;

1-53 (8) assisting veterans in securing benefits and
 1-54 services; and

1-55 (9) recommending legislative initiatives and policies
 1-56 at the local, state, and national levels to address issues
 1-57 affecting health care for veterans.

1-58 (d) The executive director of the commission shall appoint a
 1-59 program coordinator to administer the health care advocacy program.

1-60 (e) The commission shall provide facilities as appropriate
 1-61 to support the program to the extent funding is available for that

2-1 purpose.

2-2 SECTION 2. As soon as practicable after the effective date
2-3 of this Act but not later than January 1, 2016, the Texas Veterans
2-4 Commission shall establish the health care advocacy program for
2-5 veterans as required under Section 434.023, Government Code, as
2-6 added by this Act, and the Texas Veterans Commission shall adopt any
2-7 rules necessary to implement the program.

2-8 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
2-9 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
2-10 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
2-11 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
2-12 Act takes effect September 1, 2015.

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