

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 27
By: Campbell
Public Health
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Interested parties are concerned that too few communities have dedicated staff with the requisite knowledge or licensure to provide mental health services to veterans. S.B. 27 seeks to increase access to mental health services, provide support to veterans, and decrease the overall cost associated with military-related traumas by providing for the addition of licensed mental health professionals at local mental health authorities to provide clinical interventions for veterans and their families.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

S.B. 27 amends the Government Code to replace references to volunteer coordinators with references to peer service coordinators for purposes of certain duties of the Texas Veterans Commission in relation to the mental health program for veterans established by the Department of State Health Services (DSHS). The bill replaces the requirement for the commission to recruit, train, and communicate with community-based therapists, community-based organizations, and faith-based organizations for purposes of that mental health program with a requirement that the commission identify, train, and communicate with community-based licensed mental health professionals, community-based organizations, and faith-based organizations for purposes of the program.

S.B. 27 amends the Health and Safety Code to replace references to volunteer coordinators with references to peer service coordinators in statutory provisions setting out the required components of the mental health program for veterans. The bill adds DSHS-approved training for peer service coordinators and licensed mental health professionals as training the program must include and adds technical assistance for licensed mental health professionals as technical assistance the program must include. The bill replaces the requirement that the program include recruitment, retention, and screening of community-based therapists with a requirement that the program include identification, retention, and screening of community-based licensed mental health professionals.

S.B. 27 repeals provisions requiring DSHS to establish a grant program through which DSHS may award grants to regional and local organizations for the delivery of programs or services under the mental health program for veterans.

S.B. 27 repeals the following provisions:

- Section 434.351(4), Government Code
- Section 1001.221(3), Health and Safety Code
- Section 1001.223, Health and Safety Code

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2017.