

By: Blanco

H.B. No. 3556

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the mental health program for veterans.

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

SECTION 1. Section 434.351, Government Code, is amended by adding Subdivision (2-a) to read as follows:

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

SECTION 2. Section 434.352(b), Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

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

(1) provide training to peer service [~~volunteer~~] coordinators and peers in accordance with Section 434.353;

(2) provide technical assistance to peer service [~~volunteer~~] coordinators and peers;

(3) identify [~~recruit~~], train, and communicate with community-based licensed mental health professionals [~~therapists~~], community-based organizations, and faith-based organizations; and

(4) coordinate services for justice involved veterans.

SECTION 3. Section 434.353(a), Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a) The commission shall develop and implement methods for

1 providing peer service [~~volunteer~~] coordinator certification
2 training to peer service [~~volunteer~~] coordinators, including
3 providing training for initial certification and recertification
4 and providing continuing education.

5 SECTION 4. Section 1001.221, Health and Safety Code, is
6 amended by adding Subdivision (1-a) to read as follows:

7 (1-a) "Peer service coordinator" means a person who
8 recruits and retains veterans, peers, and volunteers to participate
9 in the mental health program for veterans and related activities.

10 SECTION 5. Section 1001.222(a), Health and Safety Code, is
11 amended to read as follows:

12 (a) The department shall develop a mental health
13 intervention program for veterans. The program must include:

14 (1) peer-to-peer counseling;

15 (2) access to licensed mental health professionals for
16 peer service [~~volunteer~~] coordinators and peers;

17 (3) training approved by the department for peer
18 service coordinators, licensed mental health professionals, and
19 peers;

20 (4) technical assistance for peer service [~~volunteer~~]
21 coordinators, licensed mental health professionals, and peers;

22 (5) identification [~~grants to regional and local~~
23 ~~organizations providing services under this subchapter,~~

24 [~~(6) recruitment~~], retention, and screening of
25 community-based licensed mental health professionals [~~therapists~~];

26 (6) [~~(7)~~] suicide prevention training for peer
27 service [~~volunteer~~] coordinators and peers; and

1 (7) [~~(8)~~] veteran jail diversion services, including
2 veterans treatment courts.

3 SECTION 6. Section [1001.224](#), Health and Safety Code, is
4 amended to read as follows:

5 Sec. 1001.224. ANNUAL REPORT. Not later than December 1 of
6 each year, the department shall submit a report to the governor and
7 the legislature that includes:

8 (1) the number of veterans who received services
9 through the mental health program for veterans;

10 (2) the number of peers and peer service [~~volunteer~~]
11 coordinators trained;

12 (3) [~~a summary of the grants awarded and services~~
13 ~~provided through those grants;~~

14 [~~(4)~~] an evaluation of the services provided under
15 this subchapter; and

16 (4) [~~(5)~~] recommendations for program improvements.

17 SECTION 7. The following laws are repealed:

18 (1) Section [434.351](#)(4), Government Code;

19 (2) Section [1001.221](#)(3), Health and Safety Code; and

20 (3) Section [1001.223](#), Health and Safety Code.

21 SECTION 8. This Act takes effect September 1, 2017.