

By: Lambert

H.B. No. 1598

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to an initiative to increase the capacity of local mental health authorities to provide access to mental health services in certain counties.

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

SECTION 1. Subchapter B, Chapter 531, Government Code, is amended by adding Section 531.0221 to read as follows:

Sec. 531.0221. INITIATIVE TO INCREASE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES CAPACITY IN RURAL AREAS. (a) In this section, "local mental health authority group" means a group of local mental health authorities established under Subsection (b)(2).

(b) Not later than January 1, 2020, the commission shall:

(1) identify each local mental health authority that is located in a county with a population of 250,000 or less or that the commission determines provides services predominantly in a county with a population of 250,000 or less;

(2) in a manner that the commission determines will best achieve the reductions described by Subsection (d), assign the authorities identified under Subdivision (1) of this subsection to regional groups of at least two authorities; and

(3) notify each authority identified under Subdivision (1):

(A) that the commission has identified the authority under that subdivision; and

1 (B) which local mental health authority group the
2 commission assigned the authority to under Subdivision (2).

3 (c) The commission shall develop a mental health services
4 development plan for each local mental health authority group that
5 will increase the capacity of the authorities in the group to
6 provide access to needed services.

7 (d) In developing a plan under Subsection (c), the
8 commission shall focus on reducing:

9 (1) the cost to local governments of providing
10 services to persons experiencing a mental health crisis;

11 (2) the transportation of persons served by an
12 authority in the local mental health authority group to mental
13 health facilities;

14 (3) the incarceration of persons with mental illness
15 in county jails that are located in an area served by an authority
16 in the local mental health authority group; and

17 (4) the number of hospital emergency room visits by
18 persons with mental illness at hospitals located in an area served
19 by an authority in the local mental health authority group.

20 (e) In developing a plan under Subsection (c):

21 (1) the commission shall assess the capacity of the
22 authorities in the local mental health authority group to provide
23 access to needed services; and

24 (2) the commission and the local mental health
25 authority group shall evaluate:

26 (A) whether and to what degree increasing the
27 capacity of the authorities in the local mental health authority

1 group to provide access to needed services would offset the cost to
2 state or local governmental entities of:

3 (i) the transportation of persons for
4 mental health services to facilities that are not local providers;

5 (ii) admissions to and inpatient
6 hospitalizations at state hospitals or other treatment facilities;

7 (iii) the provision of services by hospital
8 emergency rooms to persons with mental illness who are served by or
9 reside in an area served by an authority in the local mental health
10 authority group; and

11 (iv) the incarceration in county jails of
12 persons with mental illness who are served by or reside in an area
13 served by an authority in the local mental health authority group;

14 (B) whether available state funds or grant
15 funding sources could be used to fund the plan; and

16 (C) what measures would be necessary to ensure
17 that the plan aligns with the statewide behavioral health strategic
18 plan and the comprehensive inpatient mental health plan.

19 (f) In each mental health services development plan
20 produced under this section, the commission, in collaboration with
21 the local mental health authority group, shall determine the most
22 cost-effective method of increasing the capacity of the authorities
23 in the local mental health authority group to provide access to
24 needed services.

25 (g) The commission shall compile and evaluate each mental
26 health services development plan produced under this section and
27 determine:

1 (1) the cost-effectiveness of each plan; and

2 (2) how each plan would improve the delivery of mental
3 health treatment and care to residents in the service areas of the
4 authorities in the local mental health authority group.

5 (h) Not later than December 1, 2020, the commission shall
6 produce and publish on its Internet website a report containing:

7 (1) the commission's evaluation of each plan under
8 Subsection (g);

9 (2) each mental health services development plan
10 evaluated by the commission under Subsection (g); and

11 (3) a comprehensive statewide analysis of mental
12 health services in counties with a population of 250,000 or less,
13 including recommendations to the legislature for implementing the
14 plans developed under this section.

15 (i) The commission and the authorities in each local mental
16 health authority group may implement a mental health services
17 development plan evaluated by the commission under this section if
18 the commission and the local mental health authority group to which
19 the plan applies identify a method of funding that implementation.

20 (j) This section expires September 1, 2021.

21 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
22 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
23 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
24 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
25 Act takes effect September 1, 2019.