By: Lucio S.B. No. 1109

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to a public outreach campaign for aging adults with visual impairments.

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

SECTION 1. Subchapter B, Chapter 531, Government Code, is amended by adding Section 531.0319 to read as follows:

Sec. 531.0319. OUTREACH CAMPAIGNS FOR AGING ADULTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS. (a) The commission shall conduct public awareness and education outreach campaigns designed to provide information relating to the programs and resources available to aging adults who are blind or visually impaired in this state. The campaigns must be:

(1) tailored to targeted populations, including:

(A) aging adults with or at risk of blindness or visual impairment and the families and caregivers of those adults;

(B) health care providers, including home and community-based services providers, health care facilities, and emergency medical services providers;

(C) community and faith-based organizations; and

(D) the general public; and

(2) disseminated through methods appropriate for each targeted population, including by:

(A) attending health fairs; and

(B) working with organizations or groups that

serve aging adults, including community clinics, libraries, support groups for aging adults, veterans organizations, for-profit providers of vision services, and the state and local chapters of the National Federation of the Blind.

(b) To support campaigns conducted under this section, the commission shall:

(1) establish a toll-free telephone number for providing counseling and referrals to appropriate services for aging adults who are blind or visually impaired;

(2) post on the commission's Internet website information and training resources for aging adults, community stakeholders, and health care and other service providers that generally serve aging adults, including:

(A) links to Internet websites that contain resources for persons who are blind or visually impaired;

(B) existing videos that provide awareness of blindness and visual impairments among aging adults and the importance of early intervention;

(C) best practices for referring aging adults at risk of blindness or visual impairment for appropriate services; and

(D) training about resources available for aging adults who are blind or visually impaired for the staff of aging and disability resource centers established under the Aging and Disability Resource Center initiative funded in part by the federal Administration on Aging and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services; and

(3) designate an ombudsman in the commission to assist aging adults who are diagnosed with a visual impairment and are losing vision and the families of those adults with locating and obtaining appropriate services.

(c) The executive commissioner may adopt rules necessary to implement this section.

SECTION 2. This Act takes effect September 1, 2019.