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By:  Neave H.B. No. 3553

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to a grant program for mobile crisis outreach teams.

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

SECTION 1.  Subchapter B, Chapter 531, Government Code, is amended by adding Section 531.09915 to read as follows:

Sec. 531.09915.  GRANT PROGRAM FOR MOBILE CRISIS OUTREACH TEAMS. (a) In this section, "mobile crisis outreach team" means a group of mental health professionals who assist adults and children who are experiencing a mental health crisis by providing a variety of services.

(b)  The executive commissioner shall establish and administer a mobile crisis outreach team grant program to grant money to municipalities and counties to establish local agencies that, in partnership with local law enforcement and local mental health authorities, provide an alternate response program under which a mobile crisis outreach team may be deployed in the municipality or county to appropriate situations determined not to require police intervention, for the purpose of reducing the number of incarcerations by the municipality or county of individuals with:

(1)  mental illness;

(2)  substance use disorders; or

(3)  intellectual or developmental disabilities.

(c)  A grant application from a municipality or county to the commission must be submitted on a form prescribed by the commission and include a statement from the governing body of the municipality or county regarding the municipal or county proposal to establish an alternate response program that includes:

(1)  training 9-1-1 emergency service dispatchers to distinguish between situations in which the dispatcher must deploy local law enforcement and situations in which a mobile crisis outreach team may be deployed instead;

(2)  creating collaborative training opportunities to increase mental health and trauma awareness for emergency medical services providers, local law enforcement, and mobile crisis outreach teams;

(3)  strengthening community engagement to raise awareness about mobile crisis outreach teams, including by establishing relationships between mobile crisis outreach teams and:

(A)  schools;

(B)  child protective services providers;

(C)  religious organizations;

(D)  nonprofit food bank or food pantries;

(E)  community health centers;

(F)  recreation centers; and

(G)  shelters designed to provide temporary living accommodations, including:

(i)  welfare hotels;

(ii)  congregate shelters; and

(iii)  transitional housing for persons with mental illness;

(4)  ensuring mobile crisis outreach teams provide appropriate care to individuals, especially individuals who lack adequate health insurance coverage, including by identifying options for individuals to receive care through:

(A)  shelters, as defined by Section 42.201, Human Resources Code;

(B)  crisis residential programs;

(C)  treatment centers;

(D)  after hours clinics; and

(E)  inpatient and outpatient treatment programs;

(5)  promoting access to any available free or affordable care through community mental health services providers;

(6)  increasing the availability of public transportation and other transportation options for individuals who require mental health services;

(7)  employing as mobile crisis outreach team members individuals who:

(A)  hold degrees in relevant behavioral health fields and have received appropriate training to serve on a mobile crisis outreach team; or

(B)  are licensed mental health professionals; and

(8)  providing comprehensive and continuing training to employees of mobile crisis outreach teams about:

(A)  suicide;

(B)  risk assessment;

(C)  crisis intervention;

(D)  issues relevant to marginalized populations; and

(E)  bias awareness.

(d)  The executive commissioner shall develop criteria for the evaluation of applications submitted under this section and the selection of recipients for a grant under the mobile crisis outreach team grant program. The executive commissioner shall award grants on a competitive basis.

(e)  A grant awarded under this section may not exceed $5 million.

(f)  A municipality or county that receives a grant under this section is required to leverage funds in an amount:

(1)  equal to 50 percent of the grant amount if:

(A)  the county has a population of less than 250,000; or

(B)  the municipality is located in a county with a population of less than 250,000;

(2)  equal to 100 percent of the grant amount if:

(A)  the county has a population of 250,000 or more; or

(B)  the municipality is located in a county with a population of 250,000 or more; and

(3)  equal to the percentage of the grant amount otherwise required by this subsection for the largest county in which a mobile crisis outreach team is located if the mobile crisis outreach team is located in more than one county.

(g)  A municipality or county that receives a grant under this section may also accept:

(1)  gifts, grants, and donations;

(2)  money donated from the budget of a law enforcement agency;

(3)  money donated from the budget of a municipality or county; and

(4)  money donated from the budget of a local mental health authority.

(h)  The executive commissioner shall adopt all rules necessary for the establishment of the mobile crisis outreach team grant program under this section.

SECTION 2.  As soon as practicable after the effective date of this Act, the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission shall adopt rules necessary to implement Section 531.09915, Government Code, as added by this Act.

SECTION 3.  This Act takes effect September 1, 2021.