

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to a peer support network for certain law enforcement personnel.

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 1701, Occupations Code, is amended by adding Subchapter M-1 to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER M-1. PEER SUPPORT NETWORK FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

Sec. 1701.621. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

(1) "Law enforcement officer" means a person identified as a peace officer under Article 2.12(1), (2), (3), or (4), Code of Criminal Procedure.

(2) "Peer" means a person who is a law enforcement officer or retired law enforcement officer.

Sec. 1701.622. GENERAL POWERS AND DUTIES. (a) The commission shall develop a peer support network for law enforcement officers. The network must include:

(1) peer-to-peer support;

(2) training for peer service coordinators and peers that includes suicide prevention training;

(3) technical assistance for program development, peer service coordinators, licensed mental health professionals, and peers; and

(4) identification, retention, and screening of licensed mental health professionals.

1       (b) As part of the peer support network for law enforcement  
2 officers, the commission shall ensure law enforcement officers have  
3 support in both urban and rural jurisdictions.

4       (c) The commission shall solicit and ensure that  
5 specialized training is provided to persons who are peers and who  
6 want to provide peer-to-peer support and other peer-to-peer  
7 services under the network.

8       (d) The commission may adopt rules necessary to implement  
9 this subchapter.

10       Sec. 1701.623. CONTRACT WITH INSTITUTION OF HIGHER  
11 EDUCATION. The commission may contract with an institution of  
12 higher education that has appropriate expertise in mental health or  
13 law enforcement to develop the peer support network under this  
14 subchapter.

15       Sec. 1701.624. CONFIDENTIALITY OF PARTICIPANT INFORMATION.  
16 Information relating to a law enforcement officer's participation  
17 in peer-to-peer support and other peer-to-peer services under the  
18 network is confidential and may not be disclosed under Chapter 552,  
19 Government Code, by:

20               (1) the commission;

21               (2) a law enforcement agency that employs a law  
22 enforcement officer participant; or

23               (3) any other state agency or political subdivision in  
24 this state that employs a law enforcement officer participant.

25       Sec. 1701.625. PROTECTIONS RELATED TO LICENSURE. A law  
26 enforcement officer's participation in peer-to-peer support and  
27 other peer-to-peer services under the network may not:

1           (1) serve as the basis for a revocation, suspension,  
2 or denial of a license issued under this chapter; or

3           (2) be considered in any proceeding related to the  
4 officer's licensure under this chapter.

5           Sec. 1701.626. ANNUAL REPORT. Not later than December 1 of  
6 each year, the commission shall submit a report to the governor and  
7 the legislature that includes:

8           (1) the number of law enforcement officers who  
9 received peer support through the peer support network for law  
10 enforcement officers;

11           (2) the number of peers and peer service coordinators  
12 trained;

13           (3) an evaluation of the services provided under this  
14 subchapter; and

15           (4) recommendations for program improvements.

16           SECTION 2. Not later than January 1, 2022, the Texas  
17 Commission on Law Enforcement shall develop the peer support  
18 network for law enforcement officers, as required under Subchapter  
19 M-1, Chapter 1701, Occupations Code, as added by this Act.

20           SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives  
21 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as  
22 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this  
23 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this  
24 Act takes effect September 1, 2021.