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(Meza)

S.B. No. 1917

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, in collaboration with the Texas State Library and Archives Commission and other appropriate state agencies, 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

1           (B) working with organizations or groups that  
2 serve aging adults, including community clinics, libraries,  
3 support groups for aging adults, veterans organizations,  
4 for-profit providers of vision services, and the state and local  
5 chapters of the National Federation of the Blind.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 Services;

2 (3) designate a contact in the commission to assist  
3 aging adults who are diagnosed with a visual impairment and are  
4 losing vision and the families of those adults with locating and  
5 obtaining appropriate services; and

6 (4) encourage awareness of the reading services for  
7 persons who are blind or visually impaired that are offered by the  
8 Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

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

11 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect September 1, 2021.