

House Bill 35
Senate Amendments
Section-by-Section Analysis

HOUSE VERSION

SECTION 1. Chapter 418, Government Code, is amended by adding Subchapter K to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER K. FIRST RESPONDER PEER SUPPORT NETWORK

Sec. 418.351. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

(1) "Emergency medical services personnel" has the meaning assigned by Section 773.003, Health and Safety Code.

(2) "Firefighter" means a firefighter who is a permanent, paid employee of the fire department of a political subdivision. The term does not include a volunteer firefighter.

(3) "First responder" means emergency medical services personnel or a firefighter.

(4) "Peer" means a person who is a first responder or retired first responder.

Sec. 418.352. GENERAL POWERS AND DUTIES. (a) The division shall develop a first responder peer support network.

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.

(b) As part of the first responder peer support network, the division:

(1) shall ensure first responders have support in both urban and rural jurisdictions through the establishment of regional peer support hubs; and

(2) may establish a program to connect first responders with clinical resources at no cost to the first responders.

SENATE VERSION (IE)

SECTION 1. Chapter 418, Government Code, is amended by adding Subchapter K to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER K. FIRST RESPONDER PEER SUPPORT NETWORK

Sec. 418.351. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

(1) "Emergency medical services personnel" has the meaning assigned by Section 773.003, Health and Safety Code.

(2) "Firefighter" means a firefighter who is a permanent, paid employee or a volunteer of a state agency or the fire department of a political subdivision. [FA1(1)]

(3) "First responder" means emergency medical services personnel or a firefighter.

(4) "Peer" means a person who is a first responder or retired first responder.

Sec. 418.352. GENERAL POWERS AND DUTIES. (a) The division shall develop a first responder peer support network.

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 and implementation; and

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

(b) As part of the first responder peer support network, the division:

(1) shall ensure first responders have support in both urban and rural jurisdictions to the extent possible through the use of division resources; and

(2) may establish a program to connect first responders with clinical resources at no cost to the first responders.

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

Sec. 418.353. CONFIDENTIALITY OF PARTICIPANT INFORMATION. Information relating to a first responder's participation in peer-to-peer support and other peer-to-peer services under the network is confidential and not subject to disclosure under Chapter 552.

Sec. 418.354. ANNUAL REPORT. Not later than December 1 of each year, the division shall submit a report to the governor and the legislature that includes:

(1) the number of first responders who received peer support through the network;

(2) the number of peers and peer service coordinators trained, including the number of active peers and peer service coordinators and the retention rate of peers and peer service coordinators;

(3) the number of vacant regional director positions and the average length of time each position has been vacant;

(4) the number and types of community engagement events and outreach activities hosted by the network to promote first responder awareness and use of the network;

(5) the number of critical incident responses and wellness interventions facilitated by the network;

(6) an evaluation of the services provided under this subchapter; and

(7) recommendations for program improvements.

SECTION 2. Section 419.036, Government Code, is amended by adding Subsection (e) to read as follows:

SENATE VERSION (IE)

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

Sec. 418.353. CONFIDENTIALITY OF PARTICIPANT INFORMATION. Information relating to a first responder's participation in peer-to-peer support and other peer-to-peer services under the network is confidential and not subject to disclosure under Chapter 552.

Sec. 418.354. ANNUAL REPORT. Not later than December 1 of each year, the division shall submit a report to the governor and the legislature that includes:

(1) the number of first responders who received peer support through the network;

(2) the number of peers trained, the number of first responders the peers served, and the retention rate of peers;

(3) the number and location of regional network facilities in operation;

() the number of critical incident events responded to by the network; [FA1(2)]

(4) an evaluation of the services provided under this subchapter; and

(5) recommendations for program improvements.

SECTION 2. Same as House version.

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<p><u>(e) The commission may not take disciplinary action against a regulated person based on the person's participation in peer-to-peer support and other peer-to-peer services and may not consider the person's participation during any disciplinary proceeding under this chapter.</u></p> <p>SECTION 3. Section 773.061, Health and Safety Code, is amended by adding Subsection (f) to read as follows: <u>(f) The department may not take disciplinary action against a person described by Subsection (a)(1) based on the person's participation in peer-to-peer support and other peer-to-peer services and may not consider the person's participation during any disciplinary proceeding under this chapter.</u></p> <p>No equivalent provision.</p> <p>No equivalent provision.</p> <p>SECTION 4. This Act takes effect September 1, 2025.</p>	<p>SECTION 3. Same as House version.</p> <p>SECTION 4. Not later than March 31, 2026, the Texas Division of Emergency Management shall develop the first responder peer support network required by Subchapter K, Chapter 418, Government Code, as added by this Act.</p> <p>SECTION 5. The Texas Division of Emergency Management is required to implement this Act only if the legislature appropriates money specifically for that purpose. If the legislature does not appropriate money specifically for that purpose, the division may, but is not required to, implement this Act using other appropriations available for that purpose.</p> <p>SECTION 6. Same as House version.</p>	