

SUBJECT: Employing mental health professionals at the Texas Veterans Commission

COMMITTEE: Defense and Veterans' Affairs — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 7 ayes — Flynn, Tinderholt, Lopez, Lozano, Ramos, Reynolds, Romero

0 nays

2 absent — Ashby, Hinojosa

WITNESSES: For — Jim Brennan, Texas Coalition of Veterans Organizations;
(*Registered, but did not testify:* Chris Masey, Coalition of Texans with Disabilities; Julia Egler, National Alliance on Mental Illness-Texas; Robert Hamilton, Texans for Veterans; Kevin Stewart, Texas Psychological Association; Ashley Harris, United Ways of Texas; Gus Pena, Veterans for Progress)

Against — None

On — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Paul Theobald, Health and Human Services Commission)

BACKGROUND: Health and Safety Code ch. 1001 requires the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) to develop and administer a mental health intervention program for veterans.

Government Code sec. 434.352 requires the Texas Veterans Commission to coordinate with DSHS to administer the veterans mental health program, including by providing certain training and technical assistance to program service coordinators, veterans, and veterans' family members.

DIGEST: HB 4513 would require the Texas Veterans Commission to employ and train mental health professionals to assist the Department of State Health Services in the administration of the mental health program for veterans.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2019.

