

By: Menéndez

S.B. No. 1305

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the creation of a rural veterans mental health initiative within the mental health intervention program for veterans.

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

SECTION 1. Section 1001.202, Health and Safety Code, as added by Chapter 352 (H.B. 2392), Acts of the 83rd Legislature, Regular Session, 2013, is reenacted and amended to read as follows:

Sec. 1001.202. GENERAL POWERS AND DUTIES. (a) The department shall develop a mental health intervention program for veterans. The program must include:

- (1) peer-to-peer counseling;
- (2) access to licensed mental health professionals for volunteer coordinators and peers;
- (3) training approved by the department for peers;
- (4) technical assistance for volunteer coordinators and peers;
- (5) grants to regional and local organizations providing services under this subchapter;
- (6) recruitment, retention, and screening of community-based therapists;
- (7) suicide prevention training for volunteer coordinators and peers; and
- (8) veteran jail diversion services, including

1 veterans courts.

2 (a-2) As part of the mental health intervention program for
3 veterans, the department shall develop a rural veterans mental
4 health initiative.

5 (b) The department shall solicit and ensure that
6 specialized training is provided to persons who are peers and who
7 want to provide peer-to-peer counseling or other peer-to-peer
8 services under the program.

9 (c) The department may adopt rules necessary to implement
10 this subchapter.

11 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
12 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
13 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
14 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
15 Act takes effect September 1, 2015.