

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 1636
By: Zaffirini
Public Health
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

It has been suggested that a majority of Texas counties are experiencing a mental health workforce shortage and that low rates of reimbursement, few internship and residency slots, and finite opportunities to access peer support services are some of the hurdles to increasing the number of mental health professionals in Texas. S.B. 1636 seeks to address the state's shortage of health care workforce by including strategies to expand the health care workforce in Texas in the annual report prepared by the Health Professions Council.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

S.B. 1636 amends the Occupations Code to include in the annual report prepared by the Health Professions Council strategies to expand the health care workforce in Texas, including:

- methods for reducing the time required to process license applications for health care professions;
- methods for increasing the number of health care practitioners providing mental and behavioral health care services; and
- any statutory and legislative appropriation recommendations the council determines are appropriate for expanding the health care workforce in this state, including recommendations for expanding the health care workforce in medically underserved areas.

The bill adds as recipients of the annual report the chairs of the standing committees of the senate and the house of representatives having primary jurisdiction over public health and the chairs of the standing committees of the senate and the house of representatives having primary jurisdiction over state finance or appropriations. The council is not required to include the strategies in its annual report until February 1, 2021, but is required to submit a report not later than June 1, 2020, that includes only those strategies to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, and the applicable committee chairs.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2019.