

- SUBJECT:** Requiring HHSC to conduct a study on recovery housing needs
- COMMITTEE:** Public Health — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 8 ayes — S. Thompson, Allison, Coleman, Guerra, Lucio, Ortega, Price, Sheffield
- 2 nays — Frank, Zedler
- 1 absent — Wray
- WITNESSES:** For — Reginald Smith, Texas Criminal Justice Coalition; Jason Howell; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Cynthia Humphrey, Association of Substance Abuse Programs; Alyssa Thomason, Doctors for Change; Christine Yanas, Methodist Healthcare Ministries of South Texas Inc.; Alissa Sughrue, National Alliance on Mental Illness-Texas; Eric Kunish, National Alliance on Mental Illness Austin; Will Francis, National Association of Social Workers-Texas Chapter; Lee Johnson, Texas Council of Community Centers; Nataly Saucedo, United Ways of Texas; Carl F. Hunter; Columba Wilson)
- Against — None
- On — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Lisa Ramirez, Health and Human Services Commission)
- DIGEST:** HB 1465 would require the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to conduct a study to evaluate the current status of and the opportunities, challenges, and needs to expand recovery housing in Texas. The bill would define "recovery housing" as a shared living environment that promotes sustained recovery from substance use disorders by integrating residents into the surrounding community and providing a setting that connects residents to supports and services promoting sustained recovery from substance use disorders, is centered on peer support, and is free from alcohol and drug use.

In the recovery housing study, HHSC would have to:

- identify and evaluate state and federal regulations;
- create focus groups with interested community stakeholders;
- interview stakeholders and experts in recovery housing that represent both rural and urban areas;
- conduct certain site visits to recovery houses demonstrating different housing models in both rural and urban areas; and
- review scholarly research.

By December 1, 2020, HHSC would have to submit a report to the Legislature that contained results of the study and any recommendations for legislative or other actions, including policy changes and the adoption of best practices and training and technical assistance resources.

These provisions would expire September 1, 2021.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2019.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

HB 1465 would help identify gaps in recovery housing and support services by directing the Health and Human Services Commission to conduct a study. The prevalence of substance use disorders in Texas creates a clear need to expand availability of recovery supports, among them recovery housing. Recovery housing is a community-based housing model that can help people concentrate on treatment in a substance abuse-free environment while accessing peer support services.

The availability and quality of recovery housing is largely unknown, which hinders the ability to make informed policy decisions for Texans. HB 1465 would provide a more accurate understanding of recovery housing in Texas and enable the Legislature to make strategic policy decisions in the future. Identifying gaps in recovery housing would help save lives, reconnect families, and increase the well-being of Texans.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

HB 1465 could unnecessarily expand state regulation of recovery housing by requiring the Health and Human Services Commission to include

recommended legislative actions in its submitted report. The bill also is redundant because research has already been conducted on this issue. Mandating another study could strain agency resources by diverting the health commission away from fulfilling its core mission.