

1-1 By: Thompson (Senate Sponsor - West, et al.) H.B. No. 35
 1-2 (In the Senate - Received from the House May 5, 2025;
 1-3 May 5, 2025, read first time and referred to Committee on Health &
 1-4 Human Services; May 23, 2025, reported adversely, with favorable
 1-5 Committee Substitute by the following vote: Yeas 8, Nays 0;
 1-6 May 23, 2025, sent to printer.)

1-7 COMMITTEE VOTE

| | Yea | Nay | Absent | PNV |
|------|-----|-----|--------|-----|
| 1-8 | | | | |
| 1-9 | X | | | |
| 1-10 | X | | | |
| 1-11 | X | | | |
| 1-12 | X | | | |
| 1-13 | X | | | |
| 1-14 | X | | | |
| 1-15 | | | X | |
| 1-16 | X | | | |
| 1-17 | X | | | |

1-18 COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR H.B. No. 35 By: Perry

1-19 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
 1-20 AN ACT

1-21 relating to a peer support network for first responders.
 1-22 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:
 1-23 SECTION 1. Chapter 418, Government Code, is amended by
 1-24 adding Subchapter K to read as follows:
 1-25 SUBCHAPTER K. FIRST RESPONDER PEER SUPPORT NETWORK
 1-26 Sec. 418.351. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:
 1-27 (1) "Emergency medical services personnel" has the
 1-28 meaning assigned by Section 773.003, Health and Safety Code.
 1-29 (2) "Firefighter" means a firefighter who is a
 1-30 permanent, paid employee or a volunteer of the fire department of a
 1-31 political subdivision.
 1-32 (3) "First responder" means emergency medical
 1-33 services personnel or a firefighter.
 1-34 (4) "Peer" means a person who is a first responder or
 1-35 retired first responder.
 1-36 Sec. 418.352. GENERAL POWERS AND DUTIES. (a) The division
 1-37 shall develop a first responder peer support network. The network
 1-38 must include:
 1-39 (1) peer-to-peer support;
 1-40 (2) training for peer service coordinators and peers
 1-41 that includes suicide prevention training;
 1-42 (3) technical assistance for program development and
 1-43 implementation; and
 1-44 (4) identification, retention, and screening of
 1-45 licensed mental health professionals.
 1-46 (b) As part of the first responder peer support network, the
 1-47 division:
 1-48 (1) shall ensure first responders have support in both
 1-49 urban and rural jurisdictions to the extent possible through the
 1-50 use of division resources; and
 1-51 (2) may establish a program to connect first
 1-52 responders with clinical resources at no cost to the first
 1-53 responders.
 1-54 (c) The division shall solicit and ensure that specialized
 1-55 training is provided to persons who are peers and who want to
 1-56 provide peer-to-peer support and other peer-to-peer services under
 1-57 the network.
 1-58 Sec. 418.353. CONFIDENTIALITY OF PARTICIPANT INFORMATION.
 1-59 Information relating to a first responder's participation in
 1-60 peer-to-peer support and other peer-to-peer services under the

2-1 network is confidential and not subject to disclosure under Chapter
2-2 552.

2-3 Sec. 418.354. ANNUAL REPORT. Not later than December 1 of
2-4 each year, the division shall submit a report to the governor and
2-5 the legislature that includes:

2-6 (1) the number of first responders who received peer
2-7 support through the network;

2-8 (2) the number of peers trained, the number of first
2-9 responders the peers served, and the retention rate of peers;

2-10 (3) the number and location of regional network
2-11 facilities in operation;

2-12 (4) an evaluation of the services provided under this
2-13 subchapter; and

2-14 (5) recommendations for program improvements.

2-15 SECTION 2. Section 419.036, Government Code, is amended by
2-16 adding Subsection (e) to read as follows:

2-17 (e) The commission may not take disciplinary action against
2-18 a regulated person based on the person's participation in
2-19 peer-to-peer support and other peer-to-peer services and may not
2-20 consider the person's participation during any disciplinary
2-21 proceeding under this chapter.

2-22 SECTION 3. Section 773.061, Health and Safety Code, is
2-23 amended by adding Subsection (f) to read as follows:

2-24 (f) The department may not take disciplinary action against
2-25 a person described by Subsection (a)(1) based on the person's
2-26 participation in peer-to-peer support and other peer-to-peer
2-27 services and may not consider the person's participation during any
2-28 disciplinary proceeding under this chapter.

2-29 SECTION 4. Not later than March 31, 2026, the Texas Division
2-30 of Emergency Management shall develop the first responder peer
2-31 support network required by Subchapter K, Chapter 418, Government
2-32 Code, as added by this Act.

2-33 SECTION 5. The Texas Division of Emergency Management is
2-34 required to implement this Act only if the legislature appropriates
2-35 money specifically for that purpose. If the legislature does not
2-36 appropriate money specifically for that purpose, the division may,
2-37 but is not required to, implement this Act using other
2-38 appropriations available for that purpose.

2-39 SECTION 6. This Act takes effect September 1, 2025.

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