



RYAN GUILLEN
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TEXAS STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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GUILLEN TO EXPAND TEXANS' MEDICAL BENEFITS
*HB 10 Expands Protections for Those with Mental Health
Conditions & Substance Disorders*

AUSTIN - Texas State Representative Ryan Guillen (D-Rural South Texas) is an author of HB 10, a bill requiring a health benefit plan to provide mental health condition and substance use disorder benefits under the same terms and conditions as the plan's medical and surgical benefits. On **Wednesday, April 5**, HB 10 was engrossed in the House, and on **Wednesday, April 12th**, the bill was read and referred to the Senate Health & Human Services Committee.

"We as legislators must acknowledge the growing number of citizens suffering from mental health problems and substance abuse," said Guillen. "HB 10 takes steps toward the long term mental health needs of those citizens, but Texas needs to continue being proactive in addressing this issue."

Specifically, HB 10 will establish a behavioral health ombudsman, create a mental health parity work group and require state agencies and other stakeholders to submit reports on behavioral health care access issues. The bill would prohibit a health benefit plan from setting quantitative or non-quantitative treatment limitations on behavioral health conditions that are more restrictive than the plan's treatment limitations for medical or surgical expenses.

HB 10, as it currently reads, will not mandate new mental health coverage, but rather would enforce federal legislation previously enacted in 2008 by the Bush administration. In addition, the bill would not change existing regulations of health insurance plans nor the type of plan a consumer could purchase, and would not increase the cost of health insurance plans, as parity is already calculated in benefit premiums.

"It is only fair that we as legislators attempt to alleviate the growing mental health problems affecting Texans," said Guillen. "I believe this bill will allow those affected individuals an opportunity at a healthy life."

Representative Ryan Guillen serves ten rural South Texas counties in the Texas House of Representatives, including Atascosa, Brooks, Duval, Jim Hogg, Kenedy, La Salle, Live Oak, McMullen, Starr, and Willacy.

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