



Streamlining Hospital Admission Processes for Texans Seeking Voluntary Inpatient Mental Health Treatment



Sen. Nathan Johnson
(D-Dallas)



Rep. Toni Rose
(D-Dallas)

Texas hospitals support **Senate Bill 1238/House Bill 3536**, by Sen. Nathan Johnson/Rep. Toni Rose, to get Texans needing inpatient mental health treatment the care they need more quickly. SB 1238/HB 3536 would streamline the process for psychiatric hospitals to admit an individual requesting voluntary inpatient mental health treatment and expedite access to and increase continuity of care.

By allowing an individual to be admitted to a psychiatric hospital prior to receiving the required examination, SB 1238/HB 3536 would reduce the amount of time an individual waits to receive voluntary treatment.

Under current state law, an individual seeking voluntary inpatient mental health treatment first must be screened by a mental health professional to determine if he or she needs an admission exam. Then, up to 72 hours before formally admitting the individual for treatment, a physician must conduct a psychiatric and physical exam to determine if he or she meets criteria for inpatient mental health treatment.

Federal regulations then require a physician to conduct another psychiatric and physical exam after the individual is admitted. The federal exam is comprehensive and covers the same elements required by the state-mandated physician exam. Further, if a physician is not available when the individual first presents to the hospital, the individual must wait in an intake area of the hospital for the physician to arrive, delaying access to a dedicated hospital bed.

SB 1238/HB 3536 propose allowing a physician to conduct a psychiatric and physical examination up to 72 hours before or 24 hours after an individual is admitted to the hospital. **Allowing the option of conducting the psychiatric and physical exam up to 24 hours after an individual is admitted to the facility would satisfy state and federal physician examination requirements for inpatient mental health treatment and improve access to care.**

