

By the Committee on Military Affairs and Domestic Security

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1 A bill to be entitled

2 An act relating to veterans' suicide prevention;  
3 directing the Department of Veterans' Affairs, in  
4 partnership with the Statewide Office for Suicide  
5 Prevention and the Division of Community Colleges, to  
6 establish the veterans' suicide prevention pilot  
7 project, subject to the availability of funding;  
8 specifying the purpose of the project; providing  
9 project requirements; providing staff activities;  
10 requiring an evaluation report for the Governor and  
11 Legislature; providing for project expiration;  
12 amending s. 14.20195, F.S.; revising the membership of  
13 the Suicide Prevention Coordinating Council to include  
14 at least one veteran appointed by the Governor;  
15 providing an effective date.

16  
17 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

18  
19 Section 1. Veterans' suicide prevention pilot project.—

20 (1) PURPOSE.—The Department of Veterans' Affairs, in  
21 partnership with the Statewide Office for Suicide Prevention and  
22 the Division of Community Colleges, and subject to the  
23 availability of public or private funding, shall establish a  
24 pilot project at a community college or vocational technical  
25 training facility in a rural section of the state considered  
26 underserved by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.  
27 The purpose of the pilot project is to reduce the incidence of  
28 suicide among veterans by conducting outreach activities and  
29 increasing access to services and supports for veterans and

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30 their families who may be in need of mental health services and  
31 suicide prevention counseling.

32 (2) PILOT PROJECT.—The pilot project must:

33 (a) Provide outreach to veterans, their families, and the  
34 community in order to increase information on and access to  
35 services for veterans who are at risk of suicide.

36 (b) Develop a veteran-to-veteran peer support program that  
37 reaches out to veterans on a continual basis.

38 (c) Provide linkage and access-assistance services for  
39 veterans and their families to community mental health services  
40 and United States Department of Veterans Affairs mental health  
41 counseling services.

42 (3) PILOT PROJECT STAFF ACTIVITIES.—Pilot project staff may  
43 provide veterans' benefits assistance services, organize and  
44 lead a veterans' peer-to-peer support program, conduct liaison  
45 and outreach with local mental health facilities and the United  
46 States Department of Veterans Affairs health care system,  
47 provide outreach to educational facility faculty and community  
48 resources in order to educate persons about the risk of suicide  
49 among veterans and the warning signs of potential suicide which  
50 may be unique to veterans, and assist veterans and their  
51 families in obtaining needed mental health counseling services  
52 through all available federal, state, and local resources.

53 (4) PROJECT EVALUATION REPORT.—The department shall provide  
54 the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of  
55 the House of Representatives with a report that includes a  
56 description of the project design, an evaluation of project  
57 efficacy, a review of best practices developed during the  
58 project, and recommendations regarding the application of best

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59 practices to other areas of the state. The report is due by  
60 March 1, 2013.

61 (5) EXPIRATION.—The pilot project shall expire July 1,  
62 2013.

63 Section 2. Subsection (2) of section 14.20195, Florida  
64 Statutes, is amended to read:

65 14.20195 Suicide Prevention Coordinating Council; creation;  
66 membership; duties.—There is created within the Statewide Office  
67 for Suicide Prevention a Suicide Prevention Coordinating  
68 Council. The council shall develop strategies for preventing  
69 suicide.

70 (2) MEMBERSHIP.—The Suicide Prevention Coordinating Council  
71 shall consist of 29 ~~28~~ voting members.

72 (a) Fourteen members shall be appointed by the director of  
73 the Office of Drug Control and shall represent the following  
74 organizations:

75 1. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Corporation  
76 described in s. 394.655.

77 2. The Florida Association of School Psychologists.

78 3. The Florida Sheriffs Association.

79 4. The Suicide Prevention Action Network USA.

80 5. The Florida Initiative of Suicide Prevention.

81 6. The Florida Suicide Prevention Coalition.

82 7. The Alzheimer's Association.

83 8. The Florida School Board Association.

84 9. Volunteer Florida.

85 10. The state chapter of AARP.

86 11. The Florida Alcohol and Drug Abuse Association.

87 12. The Florida Council for Community Mental Health.

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88 13. The Florida Counseling Association.

89 14. NAMI Florida.

90 (b) The following state officials or their designees shall  
91 serve on the coordinating council:

92 1. The Secretary of Elderly Affairs.

93 2. The State Surgeon General.

94 3. The Commissioner of Education.

95 4. The Secretary of Health Care Administration.

96 5. The Secretary of Juvenile Justice.

97 6. The Secretary of Corrections.

98 7. The executive director of the Department of Law  
99 Enforcement.

100 8. The executive director of the Department of Veterans'  
101 Affairs.

102 9. The Secretary of Children and Family Services.

103 10. The director of the Agency for Workforce Innovation.

104 (c) The Governor shall appoint five ~~four~~ additional members  
105 to the coordinating council. At least four of the appointees  
106 must have expertise that is critical to the prevention of  
107 suicide or represent an organization that is not already  
108 represented on the coordinating council. At least one of the  
109 appointees must be a veteran.

110 (d) For the members appointed by the director of the Office  
111 of Drug Control, seven members shall be appointed to initial  
112 terms of 3 years, and seven members shall be appointed to  
113 initial terms of 4 years. For the members appointed by the  
114 Governor, three ~~two~~ members shall be appointed to initial terms  
115 of 4 years, and two members shall be appointed to initial terms  
116 of 3 years. Thereafter, such members shall be appointed to terms

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117 of 4 years. Any vacancy on the coordinating council shall be  
118 filled in the same manner as the original appointment, and any  
119 member who is appointed to fill a vacancy occurring because of  
120 death, resignation, or ineligibility for membership shall serve  
121 only for the unexpired term of the member's predecessor. A  
122 member is eligible for reappointment.

123 (e) The director of the Office of Drug Control shall be a  
124 nonvoting member of the coordinating council and shall act as  
125 chair.

126 (f) Members of the coordinating council shall serve without  
127 compensation. Any member of the coordinating council who is a  
128 public employee is entitled to reimbursement for per diem and  
129 travel expenses as provided in s. 112.061.

130 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2010.