

By Senator Simpson

18-01074-15

20151144\_\_

1  
2 A bill to be entitled  
3 An act relating to services for veterans and their  
4 families; creating s. 394.9087, F.S.; requiring the  
5 Department of Children and Families to establish the  
6 Florida Veterans' Care Coordination Program; providing  
7 goals of the program; requiring the designation of  
8 implementation teams; providing a list of required  
9 services; providing an appropriation; providing an  
10 effective date.

11  
12 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

13  
14 Section 1. Section 394.9087, Florida Statutes is created to  
15 read:

16 394.9087 Florida Veterans' Care Coordination Program.—

17 (1) The Department of Children and Families, in cooperation  
18 with the Agency for Health Care Administration and pursuant to  
19 the requirements of s. 408.913, shall establish the Florida  
20 Veterans' Care Coordination Program in all department service  
21 districts to provide veterans and their families in this state  
22 with dedicated behavioral healthcare referral services,  
23 especially mental health and substance abuse services. The  
24 department shall model the program after the proof-of-concept  
25 pilot program conducted in 2014 by the Crisis Center of Tampa  
26 Bay and the Department of Veterans' Affairs in Hillsborough,  
27 Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, and Manatee Counties.

28 (2) The goals of the program are to:

29 (a) Prevent suicides by veterans in this state.

18-01074-15

20151144\_\_

30       (b) Increase the number of veterans who make use of agency  
31 services.

32       (c) Increase the level of Veterans Administration funding  
33 for needed services to veterans in this state, thereby saving  
34 money for the state.

35       (3) The department shall designate care coordination teams  
36 to implement the program statewide. The teams shall provide  
37 referral services to veterans and their families and expand the  
38 existing Florida 211 Network, authorized by s. 408.918, to  
39 include the optimal range of veterans' service organizations and  
40 programs.

41       (4) Services provided by the program must include:

42       (a) Telephonic peer support, crisis intervention, and the  
43 communication of information and referral resources.

44       (b) Treatment coordination, including followup care.

45       (c) Suicide assessment.

46       (d) Promotion of the safety and wellness of veterans and  
47 their families, including continuous safety planning and  
48 support.

49       (e) Resource coordination, including data analysis, to  
50 ensure acceptance, enrollment, and attendance by veterans and  
51 their families in Veterans Administration programs and services  
52 and community-based programs and services.

53       (f) Immediate needs assessments, including safety planning.

54       (5) To enhance program services, program teams shall:

55       (a) Track the number of requests from callers who are  
56 veterans or their family members.

57       (b) Follow up with callers to determine whether they have  
58 acted on the referrals or received the assistance needed, or if

18-01074-15

20151144\_\_

59 additional referrals or advocacies are needed.

60 (c) Develop communication strategies, such as media  
61 promotions, public service announcements, print and Internet  
62 stories, or community presentations, to inform veterans and  
63 their families about available services.

64 (d) Document all calls and capture all data to improve  
65 outreach to veterans and their families.

66 Section 2. For the 2015-2016 fiscal year, the sum of \$2  
67 million in recurring funds is appropriated from the General  
68 Revenue Fund to the Department of Children and Families for the  
69 purpose of implementing this act.

70 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2015.