

By Senator Simpson

18-00201-16

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to services for combat veterans and
3 their families; creating s. 394.9087, F.S.; defining
4 the term "combat veteran"; requiring that the
5 Department of Children and Families establish the
6 Florida Combat Veterans' Care Coordination Program to
7 provide combat veterans and their families with
8 behavioral health care referral and care coordination
9 services; requiring that the department contract with
10 managing entities to enter into agreements with
11 Florida 211 Network participants for such services;
12 providing program goals; providing for the statewide
13 delivery of services by program teams; requiring
14 Florida 211 Network participants to collect data on
15 the implementation of the program and submit such data
16 to the department; requiring the department to submit
17 a report on such implementation to the Governor and
18 Legislature; providing an appropriation; providing an
19 effective date.

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21 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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23 Section 1. Section 394.9087, Florida Statutes, is created
24 to read:

25 394.9087 Florida Combat Veterans' Care Coordination
26 Program.-

27 (1) As used in this section, the term "combat veteran"
28 means a wartime veteran as defined in s. 1.01(14).

29 (2) The Department of Children and Families, in

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30 consultation with the Florida Alliance of Information and
31 Referral Services, shall establish the Florida Combat Veterans'
32 Care Coordination Program. The department shall contract with
33 managing entities, as defined in s. 394.9082(2)(d), to enter
34 into agreements with Florida 211 Network participants to provide
35 combat veterans and their families in this state with dedicated
36 behavioral health care referral services, especially mental
37 health and substance abuse services. The department shall model
38 the program after the proof-of-concept pilot program established
39 in 2014 by the Crisis Center of Tampa Bay and the Florida
40 Department of Veterans' Affairs in Hillsborough, Pasco,
41 Pinellas, Polk, and Manatee Counties.

42 (3) The goals of the program are to:

43 (a) Prevent suicides by combat veterans.

44 (b) Increase the use of United States Department of
45 Veterans Affairs' programs and services by combat veterans.

46 (c) Increase the number of combat veterans who use other
47 available community-based programs and services.

48 (4) The program must be available statewide. Program
49 services must be provided by program teams operated by Florida
50 211 Network participants, as authorized by s. 408.918. A Florida
51 211 Network participant may provide services in more than one
52 managing entity's geographic area under a single contract.

53 (5) The program teams shall provide referral and care
54 coordination services to combat veterans and their families and
55 expand the existing Florida 211 Network to include the optimal
56 range of veterans' service organizations and programs. Program
57 services must include:

58 (a) Telephonic peer support, crisis intervention, and the

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59 communication of information on referral resources.

60 (b) Treatment coordination, including coordination of
61 followup care.

62 (c) Suicide assessment.

63 (d) Promotion of the safety and wellness of combat veterans
64 and their families, including continuous safety planning and
65 support.

66 (e) Resource coordination, including data analysis, to
67 facilitate acceptance, enrollment, and attendance by combat
68 veterans and their families in United States Department of
69 Veterans Affairs' programs and services and other available
70 community-based programs and services.

71 (f) Immediate needs assessments, including safety planning
72 and support.

73 (6) To enhance program services, program teams shall:

74 (a) Track the number of requests from callers who are
75 combat veterans or their family members.

76 (b) Follow up with callers or their family members to
77 determine whether they have acted on the referrals or received
78 the assistance needed, or if additional referral or advocacy is
79 needed.

80 (c) Develop and implement communication strategies, such as
81 media promotions, public service announcements, print and
82 Internet articles, and community presentations, to inform combat
83 veterans and their families about available United States
84 Department of Veterans Affairs' programs and services and other
85 available community-based programs and services.

86 (d) Document all calls and capture all necessary data to
87 improve outreach to combat veterans and their families and

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88 report such data to the managing entity.

89 (7) Florida 211 Network participants shall collect and
90 submit data on the implementation of the program to the
91 department in the format prescribed by the department. The
92 department shall use such data to prepare a report for submittal
93 to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of
94 the House of Representatives by December 15, 2017. The report
95 must include:

96 (a) The number of calls received.

97 (b) Demographic information for each caller, including, but
98 not limited to, the caller's military affiliation, the caller's
99 veteran status, and if the caller is receiving services through
100 United States Department of Veterans Affairs' programs and
101 services or other available community-based programs and
102 services.

103 (c) The nature of each call, including, but not limited to,
104 the concerns prompting the call and the services requested.

105 (d) The outcome of each call, including, but not limited
106 to, the service referrals made and the organizations to which
107 the caller was referred.

108 (e) Services received as a result of each call.

109 (f) Followup by the program team, including, but not
110 limited to, the percentage of calls receiving followup and the
111 amount of time between initial contact and followup.

112 (g) The program's impact on each caller's quality of life
113 and on the avoidance of negative outcomes, including arrest and
114 suicide.

115 (h) Each caller's satisfaction with program services.

116 Section 2. For the 2016-2017 fiscal year, the sum of

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117 \$2,000,155 in recurring funds is appropriated from the General
118 Revenue Fund to the Department of Children and Families for the
119 purpose of implementing this act.

120 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2016.