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A bill to be entitled
 An act relating to services for veterans and their families; creating s. 394.9087, F.S.; authorizing the Department of Children and Families to establish the Florida Veterans' Care Coordination Program to provide veterans and their families with behavioral health care referral and care coordination services; requiring the department to contract with managing entities to enter into agreements with Florida 211 Network participants to provide such services; providing program goals; providing for the statewide delivery of specified services by program teams; requiring Florida 211 Network participants to collect program implementation data and submit such data to the department; requiring the department to submit a report to the Governor and Legislature; providing an effective date.

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

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

394.9087 Florida Veterans' Care Coordination Program.—

(1) The Department of Children and Families, in consultation with the Florida Alliance of Information and

26 Referral Services, may establish the Florida Veterans' Care
27 Coordination Program. If the department establishes the program,
28 it shall contract with managing entities as defined in s.
29 394.9082(2)(e) to enter into agreements with Florida 211 Network
30 participants to provide veterans and their families in this
31 state with dedicated behavioral health care referral services,
32 especially mental health and substance abuse services. The
33 department shall model the program after the proof-of-concept
34 pilot program established in 2014 by the Crisis Center of Tampa
35 Bay and the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs in
36 Hillsborough, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, and Manatee Counties.

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

38 (a) Prevent suicides by veterans.

39 (b) Increase veterans' use of programs and services
40 provided by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.

41 (c) Increase the number of veterans who use other
42 available community-based programs and services.

43 (3) The program must be available statewide. Program
44 services must be provided by program teams operated by Florida
45 211 Network participants, as authorized by s. 408.918. A Florida
46 211 Network participant may provide services in more than one
47 managing entity's geographic area under a single contract.

48 (4) The program teams shall provide referral and care
49 coordination services to veterans and their families and expand
50 the existing Florida 211 Network to include the optimal range of

51 veterans' service organizations and programs. Program services
52 must include:

53 (a) Telephonic peer support, crisis intervention, and the
54 communication of information on referral resources.

55 (b) Treatment coordination, including coordination of
56 followup care.

57 (c) Suicide risk assessment.

58 (d) Promotion of the safety and wellness of veterans and
59 their families, including continuous safety planning and
60 support.

61 (e) Resource coordination, including data analysis, to
62 facilitate acceptance, enrollment, and attendance of veterans
63 and their families in programs and services provided by the
64 United States Department of Veterans Affairs and other available
65 community-based programs and services.

66 (f) Immediate needs assessments, including safety planning
67 and support.

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

69 (a) Track the number of requests from callers who are
70 veterans or members of a veteran's family.

71 (b) Follow up with callers who are veterans or members of
72 a veteran's family to determine whether they have acted on the
73 referrals or received the assistance needed and whether
74 additional referral or advocacy is needed.

75 (c) Develop and implement communication strategies, such

76 as media promotions, public service announcements, print and
77 Internet articles, and community presentations, to inform
78 veterans and their families about available programs and
79 services provided by the United States Department of Veterans
80 Affairs and other available community-based programs and
81 services.

82 (d) Document all calls and capture all necessary data to
83 improve outreach to veterans and their families and report such
84 data to the managing entity.

85 (6) Florida 211 Network participants shall collect data on
86 the implementation of the program and submit such data to the
87 department in the format prescribed by the department. The
88 department shall use such data to prepare a report for submittal
89 to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of
90 the House of Representatives by December 15, 2020. The report
91 must include:

92 (a) The number of calls received.

93 (b) Demographic information for each caller, including,
94 but not limited to, the caller's military affiliation, the
95 caller's veteran status, and whether the caller is receiving
96 services provided by the United States Department of Veterans
97 Affairs or other available community-based programs and
98 services.

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

101 (d) The outcome of each call, including, but not limited
102 to, the services for which referrals were made and the
103 organizations to which the caller was referred.

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

105 (f) Information regarding followup by the program team,
106 including, but not limited to, the percentage of calls receiving
107 followup and the amount of time between initial contact and
108 followup.

109 (g) Information regarding the program's impact on each
110 caller's quality of life and on the avoidance of negative
111 outcomes, including arrest and suicide.

112 (h) Each caller's level of satisfaction with program
113 services.

114 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2019.