

By Senator Harrell

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

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

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

24 394.9087 Florida Veterans' Care Coordination Program.—

25 (1) The Department of Veterans' Affairs shall establish the
26 Florida Veterans' Care Coordination Program. The Department of
27 Veterans' Affairs shall contract with a nonprofit entity that is
28 accredited by the Council on Accreditation, is fully accredited
29 by the National Alliance of Information and Referral Services,

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30 and has statewide phone capacity to serve veterans to enter into
31 agreements with Florida 211 Network participants to provide
32 veterans and their families in this state with dedicated
33 behavioral health care referral services, especially mental
34 health and substance abuse services. The Department of Veterans'
35 Affairs shall model the program after the proof-of-concept pilot
36 program established in 2014 by the Crisis Center of Tampa Bay
37 and the Department of Veterans' Affairs in Hillsborough, Pasco,
38 Pinellas, Polk, and Manatee Counties.

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

40 (a) Prevent suicides by veterans.

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

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

45 (3) The program must be available statewide. Program
46 services must be provided by program teams operated by Florida
47 211 Network participants as authorized by s. 408.918. A Florida
48 211 Network participant may provide services in more than one
49 geographic area under a single contract.

50 (4) The program teams shall provide referral and care
51 coordination services to veterans and their families and expand
52 the existing Florida 211 Network to include the optimal range of
53 veterans' service organizations and programs. Florida 211
54 Network participants in the Florida Veterans' Care Coordination
55 Program must include all of the following:

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

58 (b) Treatment coordination, including coordination of

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59 followup care.

60 (c) Suicide risk assessment.

61 (d) Promotion of the safety and wellness of veterans and
62 their families, including continuous safety planning and
63 support.

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

69 (f) Immediate needs assessments, including safety planning
70 and support.

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

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

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

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

85 (d) Document all calls and capture all necessary data to
86 improve outreach to veterans and their families and report such
87 data to the contracted entity.

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88 (6) Florida 211 Network participants in the Florida
89 Veterans' Care Coordination Program shall maintain a database of
90 veteran-specific services available in the communities served by
91 the program. The Department of Veterans' Affairs and its
92 selected contractor shall work with managing entities as defined
93 in s. 394.9082(2)(e) to educate service providers about the
94 Florida Veterans Support Line and the Florida Veterans' Care
95 Coordination Program.

96 (7) Florida 211 Network participants shall collect data on
97 the program and submit such data to the Department of Veterans'
98 Affairs in the format prescribed by the Department of Veterans'
99 Affairs. The Department of Veterans' Affairs shall use such data
100 to prepare a report for submittal to the Governor, the President
101 of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives
102 by December 15, 2022. The report must include all of the
103 following:

104 (a) The number of calls received.

105 (b) Demographic information for each caller, including, but
106 not limited to, the caller's military affiliation, the caller's
107 veteran status, and whether the caller is receiving services
108 provided by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs or
109 other available community-based programs and services.

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

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

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

116 (f) Information regarding followup by the program team,

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117 including, but not limited to, the percentage of calls receiving
118 followup and the outcome of such followup.

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

122 (h) Each caller's level of satisfaction with program
123 services.

124 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2021.