

By Senator Burgess

20-00425A-22

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1                                   A bill to be entitled  
2       An act relating to disability claims coordinators;  
3       creating s. 381.029, F.S.; defining the terms  
4       "department" and "disability claims coordinator";  
5       authorizing counties to request the Department of  
6       Health to assign disability claims coordinators to  
7       their respective county health departments; providing  
8       that the counties are responsible for such  
9       coordinators' employment terms, duty assignments, and  
10      salaries and benefits; requiring the department to  
11      certify disability claims coordinators if they meet  
12      certain qualifications; requiring disability claims  
13      coordinators to complete certain initial and annual  
14      training; providing requirements for such training;  
15      providing duties for disability claims coordinators;  
16      requiring the department to designate at least five  
17      employees to provide administrative support to, and  
18      facilitate the exchange of information between,  
19      counties, county health departments, and disability  
20      claims coordinators; requiring the department to  
21      maintain specified information on its website;  
22      requiring the information to be made available on a  
23      dedicated webpage and in a specified manner;  
24      authorizing the department to adopt rules; providing  
25      an effective date.

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

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29       Section 1. Section 381.029, Florida Statutes, is created to

20-00425A-22

20221014\_\_

30 read:

31 381.029 Disability claims coordinators.-

32 (1) As used in this section, the term:

33 (a) "Department" means the Department of Health.

34 (b) "Disability claims coordinator" means a person  
35 certified by the department to assist residents seeking state or  
36 federal disability benefits.

37 (2) Counties may request the department to assign  
38 disability claims coordinators to their respective county health  
39 departments to assist residents seeking state or federal  
40 disability benefits. A county that requests assignment of a  
41 disability claims coordinator is responsible for determining the  
42 employment terms, assigning duties, and paying the salary and  
43 benefits for the position.

44 (3) The department must certify an individual as a  
45 disability claims coordinator if he or she meets the  
46 qualifications prescribed by the department in rule. Disability  
47 claims coordinators must complete initial and annual training  
48 approved by the department. The training must include, at a  
49 minimum, coverage of all state and federal laws and rules  
50 related to disability benefits, including eligibility  
51 requirements, eligible benefits, and the application and appeals  
52 processes for disability determinations and benefit claims.

53 (4) Disability claims coordinators shall do all of the  
54 following:

55 (a) Meet, interview, counsel, and obtain information from  
56 clients who are seeking state or federal benefits for  
57 disabilities and assist them in preparing or submitting claims  
58 for such benefits.

20-00425A-22

20221014\_\_

59 (b) Provide accurate and current information related to the  
60 eligibility requirements and applications for and administration  
61 of state and federal disability benefits.

62 (c) Review disability determinations, coordinate with the  
63 claims examiners to ensure that the determinations accurately  
64 reflect the clients' medical conditions and comply with state  
65 and federal laws and rules, and initiate corrective action or  
66 appellate review if deemed appropriate in the disability claims  
67 coordinator's professional judgment.

68 (d) Assist clients in preparing and perfecting claims  
69 appeals and provide representation at related hearings.

70 (e) Coordinate with the department's Division of Disability  
71 Determinations, including the area office responsible for the  
72 county; local field offices for the Social Security  
73 Administration; local regional offices for the United States  
74 Department of Veterans Affairs; any local organizations that  
75 assist residents in applying for disability benefits; and any  
76 other state or federal agencies responsible for processing or  
77 providing disability benefits in this state.

78 (f) Link clients to additional resources available in their  
79 communities.

80 (5) The department shall designate at least five department  
81 employees to provide administrative support to counties, county  
82 health departments, and disability claims coordinators in  
83 furtherance of their duties under this section and to facilitate  
84 the exchange of information between them to implement the  
85 purposes of this section.

86 (6) The department shall maintain on its website a list of  
87 disability claims coordinators, including their contact

20-00425A-22

20221014\_\_

88 information and the county they serve, and links to any  
89 corresponding county or county health department websites. The  
90 website must also include a description of the role disability  
91 claims coordinators serve in the disability determination  
92 process, emphasizing that they are not claims examiners but  
93 rather third-party resources for clients. The information must  
94 be available on a dedicated webpage accessible through a  
95 conspicuous link on the Division of Disability Determinations'  
96 homepage.

97 (7) The department may adopt rules to implement this  
98 section.

99 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2022.