

ENROLLED

CS/HB 635

2023 Legislature

1
 2 An act relating to dental services for veterans;
 3 creating s. 295.157, F.S.; providing legislative
 4 findings and intent; defining terms; establishing the
 5 Veterans Dental Care Grant Program in the Department
 6 of Veterans' Affairs; specifying the purpose of the
 7 program; requiring the department to contract with a
 8 direct-support organization to administer the program;
 9 requiring the department to adopt rules; providing
 10 that program funding is subject to legislative
 11 appropriation; providing an effective date.

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

14
 15 Section 1. Section 295.157, Florida Statutes, is created
 16 to read:

17 295.157 Veterans Dental Care Grant Program.—

18 (1) The Legislature finds that veterans are not afforded
 19 dental care after serving in the United States Armed Forces
 20 unless they are totally and permanently disabled or have a
 21 direct service-connected injury impacting their oral health. The
 22 Legislature further finds that this has left many veterans
 23 without access to routine dental care for many years and has
 24 resulted in severe dental conditions that worsen due to a lack
 25 of access to proper dental treatment. It is the intent of the

ENROLLED

CS/HB 635

2023 Legislature

26 Legislature to create the Veterans Dental Care Grant Program to
 27 provide veterans the opportunity to access routine dental care
 28 after they conclude their service protecting this country's
 29 freedom.

30 (2) As used in this section, the term:

31 (a) "Department" means the Department of Veterans'
 32 Affairs.

33 (b) "Veteran" has the same meaning as in s. 1.01(14). The
 34 term includes all members of the Florida National Guard and
 35 United States Reserve Forces who were discharged or released
 36 under honorable conditions only, or who later received an
 37 upgraded discharge under honorable conditions.

38 (3) The Veterans Dental Care Grant Program is established
 39 within the Department of Veterans' Affairs. The purpose of the
 40 program is to provide oral health care to veterans who reside in
 41 this state.

42 (4) The department shall contract with a statewide direct-
 43 support organization to administer the Veterans Dental Care
 44 Grant Program. The statewide direct-support organization must
 45 have proven experience developing and implementing veteran-
 46 relevant programs, including dental service programs. The
 47 organization is responsible for distributing grants to eligible
 48 nonprofits that have experience in providing dental care to
 49 veterans.

50 (5) The department shall adopt rules to administer the

ENROLLED

CS/HB 635

2023 Legislature

51 | program.

52 | (6) Funding for the program is subject to appropriation by
53 | the Legislature.

54 | Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2023.