

By Senator Sharief

35-00327-26

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to dental care for veterans; creating
3 s. 295.158, F.S.; defining terms; creating the
4 Veterans Dental Care Program within the Department of
5 Veterans' Affairs; requiring the program to provide
6 specified dental services; authorizing the department
7 to provide such services through certain means;
8 providing that funding for the program is subject to
9 legislative appropriation; authorizing the department
10 to seek federal matching funds, private donations, or
11 grants to fund the program; requiring the department
12 to submit a report annually, beginning on a specified
13 date, to the Governor and Legislature; requiring that
14 the report include specified information; requiring
15 the department to adopt rules; providing an effective
16 date.

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

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20 Section 1. Section 295.158, Florida Statutes, is created to
21 read:

22 295.158 Veterans Dental Care Program.—

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

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

25 (b) "Eligible veteran" means a resident of this state who
26 has been honorably discharged from the United States Armed
27 Forces.

28 (c) "Program" means the Veterans Dental Care Program.

29 (2) There is created within the department the Veterans

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30 Dental Care Program to expand access to comprehensive services
31 for eligible veterans.

32 (3) The program must provide, at a minimum, the following
33 dental services:

34 (a) Preventative care, including, but not limited to,
35 routine dental examinations and prophylaxis cleanings.

36 (b) Basic restorative care including, but not limited to,
37 dental fillings.

38 (c) Advanced restorative care, including, but not limited
39 to, dental crowns and tooth extractions.

40 (d) Endodontic care, including, but not limited to, root
41 canal therapy.

42 (e) Prosthodontic care, including, but not limited to,
43 dental bridges, partial dentures, complete dentures, and dental
44 implants.

45 (4) The department may provide services through any of the
46 following:

47 (a) Contracts with licensed community health centers,
48 nonprofit dental clinics, and private providers.

49 (b) Partnerships with accredited dental schools in this
50 state to increase access and reduce costs.

51 (c) Mobile dental units serving rural and underserved areas
52 of this state.

53 (5) (a) Funding for the program is subject to appropriation
54 by the Legislature.

55 (b) The department may seek federal matching funds, private
56 donations, or grants to supplement program funding.

57 (6) Beginning January 1, 2027, and every January 1
58 thereafter, the department shall submit a report to the

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59 Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the
60 House of Representatives. The report must include all of the
61 following:

- 62 (a) The number of veterans served under the program.
63 (b) The types of services provided.
64 (c) The program's expenditures and sources of funding.
65 (d) Recommendations, if any, to improve the program.
66 (7) The department shall adopt rules to implement this
67 section.

68 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.