

By Senator Wright

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to alternative treatment options for
3 veterans; creating s. 295.156, F.S.; providing
4 definitions; specifying eligibility to receive
5 alternative treatment; authorizing the Department of
6 Veterans' Affairs to contract with certain individuals
7 and entities to provide alternative treatment options
8 for certain veterans; requiring direction and
9 supervision by certain licensed providers; authorizing
10 the department to adopt rules; providing an effective
11 date.

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

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15 Section 1. Section 295.156, Florida Statutes, is created to
16 read:

17 295.156 Alternative treatment options for veterans.-

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

19 (a) "Accelerated resolution therapy" means a process that
20 replaces negative images and sensations with positive ones, uses
21 specific eye movements in conjunction with controlled
22 verbalization about details of the prior traumatic experience,
23 and uses metaphors and other interventions to assist the patient
24 in recalling less distressing images while retaining the facts
25 of the original experience.

26 (b) "Alternative treatment" means a treatment that is not
27 part of the standard of medical care established by the United
28 States Department of Veterans Affairs for treating traumatic
29 brain injury or posttraumatic stress disorder but has been shown

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30 by at least one scientific or medical peer-reviewed study to
31 have some positive effect for the treatment of traumatic brain
32 injury or posttraumatic stress disorder.

33 (c) "Equine therapy" means the use of interaction with
34 horses under the supervision of a trained equine instructor to
35 improve the patient's sense of trust and self-efficiency;
36 increase communication, socialization, and emotional management
37 skills; and decrease isolation.

38 (d) "Facility" includes a hospital, a public health clinic,
39 an outpatient health clinic, a community health center, and any
40 other facility authorized under Department of Veterans' Affairs
41 rule to provide hyperbaric oxygen therapy under this section.

42 (e) "Health care practitioner" means a person who is
43 licensed to provide medical care or other health care in this
44 state and who has prescriptive authority, including a physician.

45 (f) "Hyperbaric oxygen therapy" means a medical treatment,
46 provided at a facility in compliance with applicable state fire
47 codes, which is used in the prevention, treatment, or cure of a
48 disease or a condition in human beings by delivering a
49 saturation of 100 percent oxygen in a mono-place or multi-place
50 hyperbaric chamber or a total body chamber approved by the
51 United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA), or in a device
52 that has an appropriate FDA-approved investigational device
53 exemption, in which atmospheric pressure is increased and
54 controlled.

55 (g) "Music therapy" means the use of music listening or
56 performance to address the patient's physical, emotional,
57 cognitive, and social needs and to facilitate communication and
58 expression.

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59 (h) "Physician" means a person licensed to practice
60 medicine under chapter 458 or chapter 459.

61 (i) "Service animal training therapy" means a technique
62 that allows the patient to work directly with an animal trainer
63 to train animals as therapy or service animals.

64 (j) "Traumatic brain injury" means an acquired injury to
65 the brain. The term does not include brain dysfunction caused by
66 congenital or degenerative disorders or birth trauma.

67 (k) "Veteran" means an individual who has served in any of
68 the following:

69 1. The United States Armed Forces, including the United
70 States Army, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, or Marine Corps.

71 2. The Florida National Guard.

72 3. A reserve component of the United States Armed Forces.

73 (2) A veteran qualifies to receive alternative treatment
74 under this section if he or she:

75 (a) Has been diagnosed with service-connected posttraumatic
76 stress disorder or a traumatic brain injury by a health care
77 practitioner; and

78 (b) Voluntarily agrees to such alternative treatment.

79 (3) Subject to legislative appropriation, the Department of
80 Veterans' Affairs may contract with one or more individuals,
81 corporations not for profit, state universities, hospitals, or
82 Florida College System institutions to provide the following
83 alternative treatment options for veterans who have been
84 certified by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs or
85 any branch of the United States Armed Forces as having a
86 traumatic brain injury or posttraumatic stress disorder:

87 (a) Accelerated resolution therapy.

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(b) Equine therapy.

(c) Hyperbaric oxygen therapy, which must be provided at a registered hyperbaric oxygen facility.

(d) Music therapy.

(e) Service animal training therapy.

(4) The provision of alternative treatment must be under the direction and supervision of an individual licensed under chapter 458, chapter 459, chapter 460, chapter 490, or chapter 491.

(5) The Department of Veterans' Affairs may adopt rules to implement this section.

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