

By the Committee on Health Policy; and Senators Wright, Book,  
and Cruz

588-03686-19

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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, subject to appropriation, to  
7 contract with a state university or Florida College  
8 System institution to enter into and manage contracts  
9 for the provision of alternative treatment options for  
10 certain veterans; providing requirements as to the  
11 provision of alternative treatment options and related  
12 assessment data; requiring the department to annually  
13 prepare a report for submission to the Governor and  
14 Legislature; prescribing report requirements;  
15 authorizing the department to adopt rules; providing  
16 an effective date.

17  
18 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

19  
20 Section 1. Section 295.156, Florida Statutes, is created to  
21 read:

22 295.156 Alternative treatment options for veterans.-

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

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

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30 of the original experience.

31 (b) "Alternative treatment" means a treatment that is not  
32 part of the standard of medical care established by the United  
33 States Department of Veterans Affairs for treating traumatic  
34 brain injury or posttraumatic stress disorder but has been shown  
35 by at least one scientific or medical peer-reviewed study to  
36 have some positive effect for the treatment of traumatic brain  
37 injury or posttraumatic stress disorder.

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

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

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

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

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59 controlled.

60 (g) "Music therapy" means the use of music listening or  
61 performance to address the patient's physical, emotional,  
62 cognitive, and social needs and to facilitate communication and  
63 expression.

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

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

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

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

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

76 2. The Florida National Guard.

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

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

80 (a) Has been diagnosed by a health care practitioner with  
81 service-connected posttraumatic stress disorder or a traumatic  
82 brain injury;

83 (b) Voluntarily agrees to such alternative treatment; and

84 (c) Can demonstrate that he or she has previously sought  
85 services for a posttraumatic stress disorder or a traumatic  
86 brain injury through the federal Veterans Affairs service  
87 delivery system or through private health insurance, if such

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88 coverage is available to the veteran.

89 (3) Subject to legislative appropriation, the Department of  
90 Veterans' Affairs may contract with one state university or  
91 Florida College System institution to enter into and to manage  
92 multiple licensed provider contracts to provide the alternative  
93 treatment options specified in paragraphs (a) through (e) to  
94 veterans who have been certified by the United States Department  
95 of Veterans Affairs or by any branch of the United States Armed  
96 Forces as having a traumatic brain injury or posttraumatic  
97 stress disorder. The university or institution shall manage,  
98 monitor, and ensure the compliance of contracted providers who  
99 provide any of the following alternative treatment options:

100 (a) Accelerated resolution therapy.

101 (b) Equine therapy.

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

104 (d) Music therapy.

105 (e) Service animal training therapy.

106 (4) (a) The provision of alternative treatment must be under  
107 the direction and supervision of an individual licensed under  
108 chapter 458, chapter 459, chapter 460, chapter 490, or chapter  
109 491.

110 (b) The supervising licensed provider must agree to  
111 cooperate with the Department of Veterans' Affairs to provide  
112 data sufficient to assess the efficacy of alternative treatment  
113 modalities.

114 (5) By January 1 of each year, beginning in 2020, the  
115 Department of Veterans' Affairs shall prepare a report detailing  
116 each alternative treatment provided pursuant to this section,

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117 the provider type, the number of veterans served, and the  
118 treatment outcomes, which it shall submit to the Governor, the  
119 President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of  
120 Representatives.

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

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