

By the Committee on Appropriations; and Senators Harrell,
Wright, Rodriguez, Cruz, Stewart, Burgess, and Perry

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to services for veterans and their
3 families; creating s. 394.9087, F.S.; authorizing the
4 Department of Veterans' Affairs to establish the
5 Florida Veterans' Care Coordination Program to provide
6 veterans and their families with behavioral health
7 care referral and care coordination services;
8 authorizing the department to contract with a certain
9 nonprofit entity to enter into agreements with Florida
10 211 Network participants to provide such services;
11 providing program goals; providing for the statewide
12 delivery of specified services by program teams;
13 requiring Florida 211 Network participants to collect
14 program implementation data and to submit such data to
15 the department; requiring the department to submit a
16 report to the Governor and Legislature by a specified
17 date; providing requirements for the report; providing
18 an effective date.

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

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22 Section 1. Section 394.9087, Florida Statutes, is created
23 to read:

24 394.9087 Florida Veterans' Care Coordination Program.—

25 (1) The Department of Veterans' Affairs may establish the
26 Florida Veterans' Care Coordination Program. If the Department
27 of Veterans' Affairs establishes the program, it may contract
28 with a nonprofit entity that is accredited by the Council on
29 Accreditation, is fully accredited by the National Alliance of

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30 Information and Referral Services, and has statewide phone
31 capacity to serve veterans to enter into agreements with Florida
32 211 Network participants to provide veterans and their families
33 in this state with dedicated behavioral health care referral
34 services, especially mental health and substance abuse services.
35 The Department of Veterans' Affairs shall model the program
36 after the proof-of-concept pilot program established in 2014 by
37 the Crisis Center of Tampa Bay and the Department of Veterans'
38 Affairs in Hillsborough, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, and Manatee
39 Counties.

40 (2) The goals of the program are to:

41 (a) Prevent suicides by veterans.

42 (b) Increase veterans' use of programs and services
43 provided by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.

44 (c) Increase the number of veterans who use other available
45 community-based programs and services.

46 (3) The program must be available statewide. Program
47 services must be provided by program teams operated by Florida
48 211 Network participants as authorized by s. 408.918. A Florida
49 211 Network participant may provide services in more than one
50 geographic area under a single contract.

51 (4) The program teams shall provide referral and care
52 coordination services to veterans and their families and expand
53 the existing Florida 211 Network to include the optimal range of
54 veterans' service organizations and programs. Florida 211
55 Network participants in the Florida Veterans' Care Coordination
56 Program must include all of the following:

57 (a) Telephonic peer support, crisis intervention, and the
58 communication of information on referral resources.

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59 (b) Treatment coordination, including coordination of
60 follow-up care.

61 (c) Suicide risk assessment.

62 (d) Promotion of the safety and wellness of veterans and
63 their families, including continuous safety planning and
64 support.

65 (e) Resource coordination, including data analysis, to
66 facilitate acceptance, enrollment, and attendance of veterans
67 and their families in programs and services provided by the
68 United States Department of Veterans Affairs and other available
69 community-based programs and services.

70 (f) Immediate needs assessments, including safety planning
71 and support.

72 (5) To enhance program services, program teams shall:

73 (a) Track the number of requests from callers who are
74 veterans or members of a veteran's family.

75 (b) Follow up with callers who are veterans or members of a
76 veteran's family to determine whether they have acted on the
77 referrals or received the assistance needed and whether
78 additional referral or advocacy is needed.

79 (c) Develop and implement communication strategies, such as
80 media promotions, public service announcements, print and
81 Internet articles, and community presentations, to inform
82 veterans and their families about available programs and
83 services provided by the United States Department of Veterans
84 Affairs and other available community-based programs and
85 services.

86 (d) Document all calls and capture all necessary data to
87 improve outreach to veterans and their families and report such

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88 data to the contracted entity.

89 (6) Florida 211 Network participants in the Florida
90 Veterans' Care Coordination Program shall maintain a database of
91 veteran-specific services available in the communities served by
92 the programs. The Department of Veterans' Affairs and its
93 selected contractor shall work with managing entities as defined
94 in s. 394.9082(2) to educate service providers about the Florida
95 Veterans Support Line and the Florida Veterans' Care
96 Coordination Program.

97 (7) Florida 211 Network participants shall collect data on
98 the program and submit such data to the Department of Veterans'
99 Affairs in the format prescribed by the Department of Veterans'
100 Affairs. The Department of Veterans' Affairs shall use such data
101 to prepare a report for submittal to the Governor, the President
102 of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives
103 by December 15, 2022. The report must include all of the
104 following:

105 (a) The number of calls received.

106 (b) Demographic information for each caller, including, but
107 not limited to, the caller's military affiliation, the caller's
108 veteran status, and whether the caller is receiving services
109 provided by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs or
110 other available community-based programs and services.

111 (c) The nature of each call, including, but not limited to,
112 the concerns prompting the call and the services requested.

113 (d) The outcome of each call, including, but not limited
114 to, the services for which referrals were made and the
115 organizations to which the caller was referred.

116 (e) Services received as a result of each call.

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117 (f) Information regarding follow-up by the program team,
118 including, but not limited to, the percentage of calls receiving
119 follow-up and the outcome of follow-up.

120 (g) Information regarding the program's impact on each
121 caller's quality of life and on the avoidance of negative
122 outcomes, including arrest and suicide.

123 (h) Each caller's level of satisfaction with program
124 services.

125 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2021.