

By the Committees on Appropriations; and Health Policy; and Senators Torres, Wright, Book, Taddeo, Stewart, Jones, Cruz, Rouson, Gibson, Powell, Ausley, Bracy, Burgess, Harrell, Perry, Pizzo, Diaz, Rodrigues, Hooper, and Farmer

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to the Military Corpsmen and Medics of
3 Florida (MCMF) Program; creating s. 295.126, F.S.;
4 providing legislative intent; defining terms;
5 establishing the MCMF Program; providing the purposes
6 of the program; providing the components of the
7 program; creating the MCMF Program Office of Veterans
8 Advocacy within the Department of Health; providing
9 that the MCMF Program Veterans' Advocate is the head
10 of the office; providing qualifications of the
11 advocate; prescribing duties of the advocate;
12 requiring the MCMF Program, through the Department of
13 Economic Opportunity, to assist certain veterans and
14 their spouses with specified tasks; requiring Florida
15 Is For Veterans, Inc., to coordinate with specified
16 entities to fulfill the program's purposes and
17 recruit, establish, and maintain a statewide list of
18 participating health care providers; requiring the
19 department to waive certain fees for specified
20 veterans and their spouses; authorizing the department
21 to adopt rules; amending s. 295.22, F.S.; requiring
22 Florida Is for Veterans, Inc., to collaborate with
23 specified entities to implement the MCMF Program;
24 specifying duties of Florida Is For Veterans, Inc.,
25 related to the program; creating s. 1004.0963, F.S.;
26 defining the term "department boards"; requiring the
27 Board of Governors and the State Board Of Education,
28 in consultation with specified entities, to adopt
29 specified regulations and rules, respectively;

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30 requiring the Articulation Coordinating Committee to
31 convene a workgroup by a specified date; providing
32 responsibilities of the workgroup; providing the
33 membership of the workgroup; requiring the Office of
34 K-20 Articulation to provide administrative support to
35 the workgroup; requiring the workgroup to establish a
36 specified process for prioritizing and determining
37 certain course equivalencies and minimum credit or
38 clock hours awarded to certain individuals; requiring
39 the workgroup to provide certain recommendations to
40 the Board of Governors and the State Board of
41 Education by a specified date; requiring the
42 Articulation Coordinating Committee to approve a
43 specified list of certain course equivalencies and
44 credits and clock hours for certain veterans;
45 requiring the committee to annually update the list;
46 requiring specified entities to annually adopt the
47 updated list; providing applicability; requiring
48 specified entities to award credit and clock hours for
49 courses taken and training received by certain
50 veterans under specified conditions; authorizing
51 postsecondary institutions to award additional credit
52 or clock hours, if appropriate; providing that certain
53 credit or clock hours earned by veterans under certain
54 conditions are guaranteed to transfer to specified
55 entities; authorizing the Articulation Coordinating
56 Committee to form a certain subcommittee; providing an
57 effective date.

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

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61 Section 1. Section 295.126, Florida Statutes, is created to
62 read:

63 295.126 Military Corpsmen and Medics of Florida (MCMF)
64 Program.—

65 (1) LEGISLATIVE INTENT.—It is the intent of the Legislature
66 to assist military-trained health care veterans and their
67 spouses in finding employment in this state's health care and
68 health care-related industries, occupations, and professions as
69 they transition to civilian life and to offer educational credit
70 to military-trained health care veterans for their service in
71 the United States military, to be applied toward the education
72 and training required in this state to attain a health care or
73 health care-related license to enter a health care or health
74 care-related industry, occupation, or profession in this state.

75 (2) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section, the term:

76 (a) "Department" means the Department of Health.

77 (b) "License" has the same meaning as in s. 456.001(5).

78 (c) "Military-trained health care veteran" means a person
79 who:

80 1. Has served within the preceding consecutive 12 months as
81 an Army Combat Medic Specialist, a Navy or Fleet Marine Force
82 Hospital Corpsman, an Air Force or Space Force Aerospace Medical
83 Service Technician, or a Coast Guard Health Services Technician,
84 or in other military positions similar to civilian X-ray
85 technicians, dental assistants, medical assistants, or
86 phlebotomists; and

87 2. Was discharged or separated from military service under

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88 conditions other than dishonorable or was upgraded to an
89 honorable discharge.

90 (d) "Participating health care provider" means:

91 1. A physician licensed under chapter 458 or an osteopathic
92 physician licensed under chapter 459;

93 2. A professional corporation or partnership of physicians
94 licensed under chapter 458 or osteopathic physicians licensed
95 under chapter 459;

96 3. A hospital or ambulatory surgical center licensed under
97 chapter 395;

98 4. An office registered under s. 458.328 or s. 459.0138;

99 5. A commercial enterprise having medical facilities for
100 its employees which are supervised by one or more physicians
101 licensed under chapter 458 or osteopathic physicians licensed
102 under chapter 459; or

103 6. A facility licensed under chapter 395 which offers
104 medical services to the public and is supervised by one or more
105 physicians licensed under chapter 458 or osteopathic physicians
106 licensed under chapter 459.

107 (e) "Veteran" has the same meaning as in s. 1.01(14) and
108 includes a former member of the Florida National Guard who was
109 discharged or separated from service under conditions other than
110 dishonorable or was upgraded to an honorable discharge.

111 (3) ESTABLISHMENT.—The department, in collaboration with
112 the Department of Veterans' Affairs, Florida Is For Veterans,
113 Inc., and the Department of Economic Opportunity, shall
114 establish and administer the Military Corpsmen and Medics of
115 Florida (MCMF) Program.

116 (4) PURPOSES.—The purposes of the MCMF Program include, but

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117 are not limited to, the following:

118 (a) Assisting military-trained health care veterans and
119 their spouses in identifying and applying for health care-
120 related employment and health care licensure and to connect
121 veterans who have military health care training who are seeking
122 employment in health care fields with health care organizations
123 seeking to hire dedicated, well-trained workers.

124 (b) Meeting the health care workforce demands of this state
125 by facilitating access to training and education in health care
126 and health care-related fields for veterans and their spouses
127 and to promote the health care licensing programs provided by
128 the state.

129 (c) Assisting military-trained health care veterans and
130 their spouses in identifying health care and health care-related
131 industries, occupations, and professions within this state for
132 which they may be immediately qualified to apply or apply for
133 licensure based on previous civilian or military health care
134 training.

135 (d) Assisting military-trained health care veterans and
136 their spouses in identifying health care and health care-related
137 education and training programs within this state which will
138 recognize veterans' and their spouses' medical skills and allow
139 such veterans and spouses to build on those skills in order to
140 gain employment and work toward obtaining an appropriate health
141 care license.

142 (e) Assisting military-trained health care veterans and
143 their spouses with licensure under ss. 456.024 and 456.0241, if
144 applicable.

145 (5) PROGRAM COMPONENTS.—The MCMF Program shall consist of

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146 the following components:

147 (a) Office of Veterans Advocacy.—

148 1. There is created within the department the MCMF Program
149 Office of Veterans Advocacy.

150 2. The office shall be headed by a MCMF Program Veterans'
151 Advocate, who shall serve on a full-time basis and shall carry
152 out the purposes and functions of the office in accordance with
153 state and federal law.

154 3. The department shall designate the MCMF Program
155 Veterans' Advocate, who shall manage the development and
156 maintenance of the program through ongoing collaboration with
157 the United States Department of Defense, the Department of
158 Veterans' Affairs, the Department of Economic Opportunity,
159 Florida Is For Veterans, Inc., the Department of Education, and
160 any other identified stakeholders to further the mission of the
161 program.

162 4. The MCMF Program Veterans' Advocate must possess
163 significant advocacy skills and an understanding of the
164 following:

165 a. The Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery;
166 b. The Armed Forces Qualification Test;
167 c. The Military Occupational Code (MOC) categories;
168 d. The training received by veterans in various MOC
169 categories; and

170 e. The practice requirements of the various comparable
171 department-recognized, licensed occupations and professions.

172 5. The duties of the MCMF Program Veterans' Advocate
173 include, but are not limited to, the following:

174 a. Providing information, guidance, direction, and

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175 assistance as needed with the licensure application process or
176 with expedited licensing, as appropriate, to military-trained
177 health care veterans and their spouses transitioning into
178 civilian health care and health care-related industries,
179 occupations, and professions;

180 b. Providing specific information, including available
181 statewide educational and training opportunities and resources
182 for which military-trained health care veterans and their
183 spouses may immediately qualify, on the department's website and
184 in pamphlet format;

185 c. Providing guidance, direction, and assistance as needed,
186 including specific information on the department's website and
187 in pamphlet format, for military-trained health care veterans
188 and their spouses on additional education and training required
189 to obtain licensure for health care and health care-related
190 occupations and professions and whether such veterans and
191 spouses may qualify for expedited state licensure in the
192 following health care and health care-related occupations:

193 (I) Licensed registered or practical nurse under ss.
194 464.008, 464.009, 464.0095, and 456.024;

195 (II) Optician under s. 484.007;

196 (III) Certain radiological personnel under part IV of
197 chapter 468;

198 (IV) Emergency medical technician under ss. 401.23(11) and
199 401.27;

200 (V) Paramedic under ss. 401.23(17) and 401.27; and

201 (VI) Any other health care license type for which the
202 department finds a military-trained health care veteran or his
203 or her spouse needs guidance, direction, and assistance.

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204 d. Referring any requests to the Department of Economic
205 Opportunity to assist military-trained health care veterans and
206 their spouses in resume writing and proofreading, job
207 application completion, and interviewing skills and techniques.

208 (b) No veteran left behind.—Veterans who do not meet the
209 definition of the term “military-trained health care veteran”
210 but who have served in health care-related fields must receive
211 assistance from the MCMF Program through the Department of
212 Economic Opportunity in resume writing and proofreading,
213 mentorship, and obtaining employment with participating health
214 care providers.

215 (c) Health care leadership.—The MCMF Program, through the
216 Department of Economic Opportunity, shall assist veterans and
217 their spouses who have gained management experience or have
218 completed an advanced degree in finding civilian health care
219 leadership and management employment opportunities in a variety
220 of health care and health care-related disciplines.

221 (d) Promote participating health care providers.—Florida Is
222 For Veterans, Inc., in coordination with the Department of
223 Economic Opportunity, the Department of Health, and the MCMF
224 Program Office of Veterans Advocacy, shall work to fulfill the
225 purposes of the program and to recruit, establish, and maintain
226 a statewide list of the MCMF Program participating health care
227 providers which it shall make available to the department, the
228 MCMF Program, and veterans and their spouses upon request.

229 (6) FEES.—The department shall waive all application fees,
230 certificate fees, and unlicensed activity fees for military-
231 trained health care veterans and their spouses.

232 (7) RULEMAKING AUTHORITY.—The department may adopt rules

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233 pursuant to ss. 120.536(1) and 120.54 to implement this section.

234 Section 2. Paragraph (g) is added to subsection (3) of
235 section 295.22, Florida Statutes, to read:

236 295.22 Veterans Employment and Training Services Program.—

237 (3) ADMINISTRATION.—Florida Is For Veterans, Inc., shall
238 administer the Veterans Employment and Training Services Program
239 and perform all of the following functions:

240 (g) Assist the Department of Health in fulfilling the
241 purposes of the Military Corpsmen and Medics of Florida (MCMF)
242 Program as set forth in s. 295.126(4). The corporation shall:

243 1. Recruit health care providers to participate in the MCMF
244 Program and establish and maintain a statewide list, by
245 geographical area, of such participating health care providers
246 as defined in s. 295.126(2) in furtherance of the Legislature's
247 intent to provide preference, priority, and available waivers to
248 military-trained health care veterans as defined in s.
249 295.126(2) and their spouses for certain educational
250 requirements in the hiring practices set forth in ss. 295.065,
251 295.07, 295.08, and 295.085. Florida Is For Veterans, Inc.,
252 shall make the list available to military-trained health care
253 veterans and their spouses upon request.

254 2. Assist participating health care providers in recruiting
255 and hiring military-trained health care veterans and their
256 spouses by connecting such health care providers with suitable
257 applicants for employment.

258 3. Assist a military-trained health care veteran
259 participating in the program, or the veteran's spouse, in
260 identifying participating health care providers for potential
261 employment, including providing assistance with resume writing

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262 and proofreading, application completion, and interviewing
263 skills. Florida Is For Veterans, Inc., may consult and
264 coordinate with the Department of Economic Opportunity to make
265 referrals for such assistance.

266 4. Assist MCMF Program military-trained health care
267 veterans and their spouses who have gained management experience
268 or have completed an advanced degree in finding civilian health
269 care leadership and management employment in a variety of health
270 care and health care-related disciplines. Florida Is For
271 Veterans, Inc., may consult and coordinate with the Department
272 of Economic Opportunity to make referrals for such assistance.

273 Section 3. Section 1004.0963, Florida Statutes, is created
274 to read:

275 1004.0963 Postsecondary credit for health care and health
276 care-related military training and education courses.-

277 (1) As used in this section, the term "department boards"
278 means any Department of Health board or the department if there
279 is no board.

280 (2) In consultation with the Department of Veterans'
281 Affairs and the Department of Health, the Board of Governors
282 shall adopt regulations, and the State Board of Education shall
283 adopt rules, to create a process that enables eligible military-
284 trained health care veterans as defined in s. 295.126(2) to earn
285 uniform postsecondary educational credit across all Florida
286 public postsecondary educational institutions for college-level
287 education and training acquired while serving in the military.
288 The regulations and rules must include procedures for credential
289 evaluation and the uniform award of postsecondary educational
290 credit and career education academic and clinical clock hours,

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291 including, but not limited to, equivalency and alignment of
292 military coursework with appropriate postsecondary educational
293 courses and course descriptions. The regulations and rules must
294 provide for procedures to develop systematically coordinated
295 educational course equivalencies to be set out in the statewide
296 articulation agreement required by s. 1007.23(1) which enable
297 eligible military-trained health care veterans to earn uniform
298 educational course credit and uniform academic and clinical
299 clock hours across all Florida public colleges, universities,
300 training schools, and training programs for education and
301 training acquired in the military.

302 (3) The Articulation Coordinating Committee shall convene a
303 workgroup by July 15, 2023, which is responsible for developing
304 a process for determining postsecondary educational course
305 equivalencies and the minimum postsecondary educational credit
306 for career education and academic and clinical clock hours which
307 must be awarded for courses taken and occupations performed by
308 individuals during their service in the military.

309 (a) The workgroup shall be composed of the following
310 members:

311 1. The chair of the Articulation Coordinating Committee or
312 his or her designee, who shall serve as chair.

313 2. One member representing academic affairs administrators
314 and faculty from state universities with expertise in health
315 care and health care-related industries, occupations, and
316 professions, appointed by the chair of the Board of Governors.

317 3. One member representing academic affairs administrators
318 and faculty from Florida College System institutions with
319 expertise in health care and health care-related industries,

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320 occupations, and professions, appointed by the chair of the
321 State Board of Education.

322 4. One member representing faculty from career centers with
323 expertise in health care and health care-related industries,
324 occupations, and professions, appointed by the State Board of
325 Education.

326 5. Two members representing veterans familiar with the
327 Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery; the Armed Forces
328 Qualification Test; the Military Occupational Code (MOC)
329 categories; and the training received by veterans in various MOC
330 categories, appointed by the executive director of the
331 Department of Veterans' Affairs.

332 6. Four faculty members appointed by the appropriate
333 department boards to represent state universities, Florida
334 College System institutions, career centers, training schools,
335 and training programs of this state which train emergency
336 medical technicians, opticians, paramedics, licensed practical
337 nurses, registered nurses, and radiologic technologists, or
338 other health care or health care-related industries,
339 occupations, or professions as deemed appropriate by the
340 department.

341 (b) The Office of K-20 Articulation shall provide
342 administrative support for the workgroup.

343 (c) The workgroup shall establish a process for
344 prioritizing and determining postsecondary educational course
345 equivalencies and the minimum postsecondary educational credit
346 or career education and academic and clinical clock hours that
347 must be awarded for courses taken and training received for
348 occupations performed by individuals during their service in the

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349 military. The workgroup shall provide recommendations to the
350 Board of Governors and the State Board of Education by December
351 1, 2024, for approval at the next meeting of each board to allow
352 for adequate public notice.

353 (d) Upon approval of the workgroup's recommendations, the
354 Articulation Coordinating Committee must facilitate the review
355 of courses taken and occupations performed by individuals during
356 their service in the military for postsecondary educational
357 course equivalencies and the minimum postsecondary educational
358 credit or career education and academic and clinical clock hours
359 that must be awarded in accordance with the approved process.

360 (e) Within 1 year after approval of the workgroup's
361 recommendations, the Articulation Coordinating Committee must
362 approve a prioritized list of systematically coordinated
363 postsecondary educational course equivalencies and the minimum
364 postsecondary educational credit for military career education
365 and training and academic and clinical clock hours that must be
366 awarded for courses taken and occupations performed by
367 individuals during their service in the military. The list must
368 be updated annually. The Board of Governors, the department
369 boards, and the State Board of Education must timely adopt the
370 list approved by the Articulation Coordinating Committee at the
371 next meeting of each board to allow for adequate public notice.
372 For the purpose of statewide application, postsecondary
373 educational course equivalencies and the minimum postsecondary
374 educational credit, career education, and academic and clinical
375 clock hours that must be awarded for courses taken and the
376 training received for occupations performed by individuals
377 during service in the military must be delineated by the State

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378 Board of Education and the Board of Governors in the statewide
379 articulation agreement required by s. 1007.23(1).

380 (f) State universities, Florida College System
381 institutions, career centers, training schools, and training
382 programs must award postsecondary educational credit and
383 academic and clinical clock hours for courses taken and training
384 received for occupations performed by individuals during service
385 in the military based on the list adopted by the Board of
386 Governors, the State Board of Education, and the department
387 boards pursuant to paragraph (e) if the educational credit or
388 career education and academic and clinical clock hours can be
389 applied toward the student's degree or certificate.

390 (g) Postsecondary institutions may award additional
391 educational credit and academic and clinical clock hours, if
392 appropriate. Educational credit or academic and clinical clock
393 hours awarded in accordance with minimum postsecondary
394 educational credit and academic and clinical clock hour
395 requirements, respectively, are guaranteed to transfer to other
396 state universities, Florida College System institutions, career
397 centers, training schools, and training programs.

398 (h) The Articulation Coordinating Committee may form a
399 subcommittee to carry out the committee's duties under this
400 subsection.

401 Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2022.