

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 2017 SESSION

CHAPTER 497

An Act to amend and reenact § 2.2-2001.1 of the Code of Virginia, relating to the Virginia Veteran and Family Support program.

[H 2206]

Approved March 13, 2017

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 2.2-2001.1 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 2.2-2001.1. Program for mental health and rehabilitative services.

A. The Department, in cooperation with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services and the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services, shall establish a program to monitor and coordinate mental health and rehabilitative services support for Virginia veterans and members of the Virginia National Guard and Virginia residents in the Armed Forces Reserves not in active federal service. The program shall also support family members affected by covered military members' service and deployments. The purpose of the program is to ~~ensure that adequate and timely assessment, treatment, and support are available to veterans, service members, and affected family members, in a cost-effective manner, refer veterans to mental health, physical rehabilitation, and other services as needed to help them achieve individually identified goals and to periodically monitor their progress toward achieving those goals.~~

B. The program shall ~~facilitate support for covered individuals to provide timely assessment and treatment for stress-related injuries and traumatic brain injuries resulting from military service, and, subject to the availability of public and private funds appropriated for them, case management services, outpatient, family support, and other appropriate behavioral health and brain injury services necessary to provide individual services and support such purposes, (i) build awareness of veterans' service needs and the availability of the program through marketing, outreach, training for first responders, service providers, and others; (ii) collaborate with relevant agencies of the Commonwealth, localities, and service providers; (iii) develop and implement a consistent method of determining how many veterans in the Commonwealth are in need of mental health, physical rehabilitation, or other services currently or may be in need of such services in the future; (iv) work with veterans to develop a coordinated resources plan that identifies appropriate service providers to meet the veteran's service needs; (v) refer veterans to appropriate and available providers on the basis of needs identified in the coordinated resources plan; and (vi) monitor progress toward individually identified goals in accordance with the coordinated resource plan.~~

Coordinated resources plans shall be developed and veterans shall be referred to necessary services in a timely manner. The program shall prioritize veterans served on the basis of the immediacy and severity of service needs and the likelihood that those needs are attributable to the veteran's military service or combat experience.

C. *The program shall cooperate with localities that may establish special treatment procedures for veterans and active military service members such as authorized by §§ 9.1-173 and 9.1-174. To facilitate local involvement and flexibility in responding to the problem of crime in local communities and to effectively treat, counsel, rehabilitate, and supervise veterans and active military service members who are offenders or defendants in the criminal justice system and who need access to proper treatment for mental illness including major depression, alcohol or drug abuse, post traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury or a combination of these, any city, county, or combination thereof, may develop, establish, and maintain policies, procedures, and treatment services for all such offenders who are convicted and sentenced for misdemeanors or felonies that are not felony acts of violence, as defined in § 19.2-297.1. Such policies, procedures, and treatment services shall be designed to provide:*

1. Coordination of treatment and counseling services available to the criminal justice system case processing;
2. Enhanced public safety through offender supervision, counseling, and treatment;
3. Prompt identification and placement of eligible participants;
4. Access to a continuum of treatment, rehabilitation, and counseling services in collaboration with such care providers as are willing and able to provide the services needed;
5. Where appropriate, verified participant abstinence through frequent alcohol and other drug testing;
6. Prompt response to participants' noncompliance with program requirements;
7. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of program effectiveness and efficiency;
8. Ongoing education and training in support of program effectiveness and efficiency;
9. Ongoing collaboration among public agencies, community-based organizations and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs health care networks, the Veterans Benefits Administration, volunteer

veteran mentors, and veterans and military family support organizations; and

10. The creation of a veterans and military service members' advisory council to provide input on the operations of such programs. The council shall include individuals responsible for the criminal justice procedures program along with veterans and, if available, active military service members.

D. The program shall report annually to the Governor and the General Assembly the number of veterans, members of the Virginia National Guard and Virginia residents in the Armed Forces Reserves not in active federal service, and family members affected by covered military members' service and deployments for whom coordinated resources plans are developed and who are referred for services; information about services provided to veterans, members of the Virginia National Guard, members of the Armed Forces Reserves not in active federal service, and family members, including information about the types of services provided and the quality of those services; and the number of veterans, members of the Virginia National Guard, members of the Armed Forces Reserves not in active federal service, and family members identified by the program as in need of services but not referred for services.