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**SENATE BILL 6194**

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**State of Washington 65th Legislature 2018 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Angel, Rolfes, Conway, and Wagoner; by request of Department of Veterans Affairs

AN ACT Relating to the department of veterans affairs; amending RCW 43.60A.050, 72.36.020, 72.36.090, 72.36.100, 72.36.110, and 72.36.150; and reenacting RCW 43.60A.100.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

**Sec.**  RCW 43.60A.100 and 2017 c 192 s 2 and 2017 c 185 s 2 are each reenacted to read as follows:

The department of veterans affairs, to the extent funds are made available, shall: (1) Contract with professional counseling specialists to provide a range of direct treatment services to state veterans, including national guard and reservists, with military-related mental health needs, and their family members; (2) provide additional treatment services to Washington state Vietnam veterans for posttraumatic stress disorder, particularly for those veterans whose posttraumatic stress disorder has intensified or initially emerged due to war or combat-related stress; (3) provide an educational program designed to train primary care professionals, such as mental health professionals, about the effects of war-related stress, trauma, and traumatic brain injury; (4) provide informational and counseling services for the purpose of establishing and fostering peer-support networks throughout the state for families of deployed members of the reserves and the Washington national guard; (5) provide for veterans' families, a referral network of community mental health providers who are skilled in treating deployment stress, combat stress, posttraumatic stress, ((~~and~~)) traumatic brain injury; and (6) offer training and support for volunteers interested in providing peer-to-peer support to other veterans.

**Sec.**  RCW 43.60A.050 and 1975-'76 2nd ex.s. c 115 s 5 are each amended to read as follows:

The director may appoint ((~~such assistants and executive staff~~)) a deputy director and assistant directors as shall be needed to administer the department, all of whom shall be veterans. The ((~~director shall designate a~~)) deputy ((~~from the executive staff who~~)) shall have charge and general supervision of the department in the absence or disability of the director, and in case of a vacancy in the office of director, shall continue in charge of the department until a successor is appointed and qualified, or until the governor shall appoint an acting director.

**Sec.**  RCW 72.36.020 and 2014 c 184 s 2 are each amended to read as follows:

The director of the department of veterans affairs shall appoint ((~~a superintendent~~)) an administrator for each state veterans' home. The ((~~superintendent~~)) administrator shall exercise management and control of the institution in accordance with either policies or procedures promulgated by the director of the department of veterans affairs, or both, and rules of the department. In accordance with chapter 18.52 RCW, the individual appointed as ((~~superintendent for either~~)) administrator for a state veterans' home shall be a licensed nursing home administrator and the agency shall provide preference to honorably discharged veterans in accordance with RCW 73.16.010.

**Sec.**  RCW 72.36.090 and 2001 2nd sp.s. c 4 s 8 are each amended to read as follows:

The ((~~superintendents~~)) administrators of the state veterans' homes are hereby authorized to:

(1) Institute programs of hobby promotion designed to improve the general welfare and mental condition of the persons under their supervision;

(2) Provide for the financing of these programs by grants from funds in the ((~~superintendent's~~)) administrator's custody through operation of canteens and exchanges at such institutions;

(3) Limit the hobbies sponsored to projects which will, in their judgment, be self-liquidating or self-sustaining.

**Sec.**  RCW 72.36.100 and 1959 c 28 s 72.36.100 are each amended to read as follows:

The ((~~superintendent~~)) administrator of each institution referred to in RCW 72.36.090 may purchase, from the appropriation to the institution, for operations, equipment or materials designed to initiate the programs authorized by RCW 72.36.090.

**Sec.**  RCW 72.36.110 and 2008 c 6 s 507 are each amended to read as follows:

The ((~~superintendent~~)) administrator of the Washington veterans' home and the ((~~superintendent~~)) administrator of the Washington soldiers' home and colony are hereby authorized to provide for the burial of deceased members in the cemeteries provided at the Washington veterans' home and Washington soldiers' home: PROVIDED, That this section shall not be construed to prevent any relative from assuming jurisdiction of such deceased persons: PROVIDED FURTHER, That the ((~~superintendent~~)) administrator of the Washington soldiers' home and colony is hereby authorized to provide for the burial of spouses or domestic partners of members of the colony of the Washington soldiers' home.

**Sec.**  RCW 72.36.150 and 1993 sp.s. c 3 s 3 are each amended to read as follows:

The department of veterans affairs shall provide by rule for the annual election of a resident council for each state veterans' home. The council shall annually elect a chair from among its members, who shall call and preside at council meetings. The resident council shall serve in an advisory capacity to the director of the department of veterans affairs and to the ((~~superintendent~~)) administrator in all matters related to policy and operational decisions affecting resident care and life in the home.

By October 31, 1993, the department shall adopt rules that provide for specific duties and procedures of the resident council which create an appropriate and effective relationship between residents and the administration. These rules shall be adopted after consultation with the resident councils and the state long-term care ombuds, and shall include, but not be limited to the following:

(1) Provision of staff technical assistance to the councils;

(2) Provision of an active role for residents in developing choices regarding activities, foods, living arrangements, personal care, and other aspects of resident life;

(3) A procedure for resolving resident grievances; and

(4) The role of the councils in assuring that resident rights are observed.

The development of these rules should include consultation with all residents through the use of both questionnaires and group discussions.

The resident council for each state veterans' home shall annually review the proposed expenditures from the benefit fund that shall contain all private donations to the home, all bequeaths, and gifts. Disbursements from each benefit fund shall be for the benefit and welfare of the residents of the state veterans' homes. Disbursements from the benefits funds shall be on the authorization of the ((~~superintendent~~)) administrator or ((~~his or her~~)) the administrator's authorized representative after approval has been received from the home's resident council.

The ((~~superintendent~~)) administrator or ((~~his or her~~)) the administrator's designated representative shall meet with the resident council at least monthly. The director of the department of veterans affairs shall meet with each resident council at least three times each year.

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