
HOUSE BILL 1571

State of Washington

65th Legislature

2017 Regular Session

By Representatives Reeves, Muri, Ryu, Kilduff, Sawyer, Steele, Macri, Orwall, Tharinger, Chapman, Stanford, Doglio, Fey, Hudgins, Stonier, Frame, Kloba, Springer, J. Walsh, McBride, Ortiz-Self, Riccelli, and Slatter

Read first time 01/24/17. Referred to Committee on Community Development, Housing & Tribal Affairs.

1 AN ACT Relating to creating a community care and supportive
2 services program for veterans; adding new sections to chapter 43.60A
3 RCW; creating a new section; and providing an expiration date.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 43.60A
6 RCW to read as follows:

7 The legislature finds that veterans living in rural and remote
8 areas of the state experience particular barriers in their ability to
9 access federal veterans' benefits and reintegration services and
10 other public services. The legislature further finds that the
11 percentage of veterans in rural or remote areas who are elderly or
12 disabled is higher than in the nonveteran or urban veteran
13 populations, which increases the need for services and care for
14 veterans in those areas. For these reasons, the legislature intends
15 to increase outreach to veterans in rural and remote areas through
16 community and regional programs that can assist veterans in accessing
17 benefits and services. The pilot program created in this act will
18 provide the department of veterans affairs with the resources to
19 examine and recommend ways of working with partners within rural and
20 remote communities to increase access to care and services for
21 veterans.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 43.60A
2 RCW to read as follows:

3 (1) The department of veterans affairs must select one county
4 veterans' assistance program or community partner to pilot a
5 community care and supportive services program that assists veterans
6 and their families in rural or remote areas that do not have adequate
7 access to federal veterans' benefits and reintegration services and
8 other public services. The department must select the county program
9 by January 1, 2018.

10 (2) The selection of the county veterans' assistance program or
11 community partner to pilot a community care and supportive services
12 program should be based upon the following assessment:

13 (a) The current ability of county veteran residents to access
14 federal veterans' benefits and reintegration services and other
15 public services;

16 (b) The capability of the county veterans' assistance program or
17 community partner to successfully manage the pilot program; and

18 (c) The projected outcome of success that the pilot program will
19 be able to increase access for veterans to federal veterans' benefits
20 and other public service programs.

21 (3) The community care and supportive services pilot program must
22 provide assistance for veterans and their families residing in rural
23 or remote areas to increase adequate access to federal veterans'
24 benefits and reintegration services and other public services. The
25 pilot program may include any of the following services:

26 (a) Assistance in obtaining and coordinating veterans' benefits
27 through the United States veterans administration or other federal
28 agency, including health care services, employment and training
29 services, educational assistance, vocational and rehabilitation
30 counseling, and reintegration services;

31 (b) Assistance in obtaining and coordinating other public
32 services, including:

33 (i) Mental health evaluation and treatment, such as suicide
34 prevention, post traumatic stress disorder, and other issues;

35 (ii) Substance abuse awareness, treatment, and prevention;

36 (iii) Counseling services in areas such as family support, anger
37 management, personal finances, housing, and employment;

38 (iv) Domestic violence awareness, protection, and prevention;

39 (v) Children services;

40 (vi) Transportation; and

1 (vii) Other services appropriate to address the needs of veterans
2 and their families; and

3 (c) Direct assistance of any public service provided by the
4 county or community partner that addresses the particular needs of
5 the veteran population and their families and is otherwise
6 unavailable through existing public or private programs.

7 (4) By December 1, 2019, in compliance with RCW 43.01.036, the
8 department of veterans affairs must submit a report to the
9 appropriate standing committees in each house of the legislature that
10 evaluates the pilot program in achieving the objective to increase
11 access to federal and other public services for veterans and their
12 families. The report must provide the number of persons served, the
13 number and types of referrals made, the type of outreach conducted,
14 and the availability of resources within the service area. The report
15 also must evaluate the effectiveness of the pilot program as well as
16 provide recommendations on how the program could be improved and
17 whether the program should be continued or expanded.

18 (5) For purposes of this section, "community partner" means any
19 congressionally chartered or nationally recognized veterans service
20 with at least one active chapter within the state of Washington, or
21 other established organization with capacity to provide services for
22 veterans.

23 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** If specific funding for the purposes of
24 this act is not provided by June 30, 2017, in the omnibus
25 appropriations act, this act is null and void.

26 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** This act expires July 1, 2020.

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