

Chapter 35

**(Senate Bill 521)**

AN ACT concerning

**Veteran Suicide Prevention – Comprehensive Action Plan**

FOR the purpose of requiring the Maryland Department of Health to develop a certain action plan to increase access to and the availability of professional veteran health services to prevent veteran suicides that includes certain initiatives and reforms and a plan for implementation beginning on or before certain dates; requiring the plan to address certain matters; requiring the Department to collaborate with interested parties in developing the plan; requiring the Department to implement certain initiatives and reforms by certain dates; requiring the Department to report to the Governor and the General Assembly on or before a certain date; providing for the termination of this Act; and generally relating to a comprehensive action plan for veteran suicide prevention.

BY adding to

Article – Health – General

Section 13–3901 to be under the new subtitle “Subtitle 39. Veteran Suicide Prevention”

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2015 Replacement Volume and 2018 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

**Article – Health – General**

**SUBTITLE 39. VETERAN SUICIDE PREVENTION.**

**13–3901.**

**(A) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE ACTION PLAN TO INCREASE ACCESS TO AND AVAILABILITY OF PROFESSIONAL VETERAN HEALTH SERVICES TO PREVENT VETERAN SUICIDES THAT INCLUDES:**

**(1) SHORT–TERM INITIATIVES AND REFORMS AND A PLAN FOR STATE IMPLEMENTATION BEGINNING ON OR BEFORE JULY 1, 2021; AND**

**(2) LONG–TERM INITIATIVES AND REFORMS AND A PLAN FOR STATE IMPLEMENTATION BEGINNING ON OR BEFORE JULY 1, 2023.**

**(B) THE ACTION PLAN DEVELOPED UNDER SUBSECTION (A) OF THIS SECTION SHALL:**

**(1) IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES FOR RAISING AWARENESS OF AND PROVIDING RESOURCES FOR VETERAN SUICIDE PREVENTION;**

**(2) IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES TO INCREASE ACCESS TO VETERAN MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES;**

**(3) IDENTIFY FUNDING RESOURCES TO PROVIDE ACCESSIBLE AND AFFORDABLE VETERAN MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES;**

**(4) PROVIDE MEASURES TO EXPAND PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS TO ENSURE ACCESS TO QUALITY AND TIMELY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES;**

**(5) PROVIDE FOR PROACTIVE OUTREACH MEASURES TO REACH VETERANS NEEDING CARE;**

**(6) PROVIDE FOR PEER-TO-PEER SERVICE COORDINATION, INCLUDING TRAINING, CERTIFICATION, RECERTIFICATION, AND CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR PEER COORDINATORS; AND**

**(7) ADDRESS SUICIDE PREVENTION AWARENESS, MEASURES, AND TRAINING REGARDING VETERANS WHO ARE INVOLVED IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM.**

**(C) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL COLLABORATE WITH INTERESTED PARTIES IN DEVELOPING THE PLAN REQUIRED UNDER SUBSECTION (A) OF THIS SECTION, INCLUDING:**

**(1) THE MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS;**

**(2) THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS;**

**(3) THE SERVICE MEMBERS, VETERANS, AND THEIR FAMILIES TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER IMPLEMENTATION ACADEMY OF THE SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ADMINISTRATION OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES;**

**(4) VETERAN ADVOCACY GROUPS;**

**(5) MEDICAL PROVIDERS; AND**

**(6) ANY OTHER INTERESTED PARTY THE DEPARTMENT CONSIDERS APPROPRIATE.**

**(D) (1) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL IMPLEMENT THE SHORT-TERM INITIATIVES AND REFORMS IN THE PLAN DEVELOPED UNDER SUBSECTION (A)(1) OF THIS SECTION ON OR BEFORE JUNE 30, 2023.**

**(2) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL IMPLEMENT THE LONG-TERM INITIATIVES AND REFORMS IN THE PLAN REQUIRED UNDER SUBSECTION (A)(2) OF THIS SECTION ON OR BEFORE JUNE 30, 2029.**

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That, on or before July 1, 2020, the Maryland Department of Health shall report to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, the General Assembly on any statutory, administrative, and budgetary changes that would need to be made to implement the initiatives and reforms included in the action plan developed under § 13-3901 of the Health – General Article, as enacted by Section 1 of this Act.

SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July 1, 2019. It shall remain effective for a period of 10 years and, at the end of June 30, 2029, this Act, with no further action required by the General Assembly, shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.

**Approved by the Governor, April 18, 2019.**