

## Chapter 155

## (Senate Bill 66)

AN ACT concerning

**Health – Vital Statistics – Veteran and Armed Services Member Suicide Reporting**

FOR the purpose of ~~altering the information that is required on a certificate of death to include, under certain circumstances, whether the decedent was ever a member of the armed forces of the United States;~~ requiring the Secretary of the Maryland Department of Health to publish an annual report on ~~veteran suicide~~ ~~the suicides of veterans and members currently serving in the armed services of the United States;~~ limiting the information that may be included in the report; ~~requiring that the report contain aggregate information for a certain period of time;~~ requiring the Secretary to submit the report to the State Department of Veterans Affairs and certain committees of the General Assembly on or before a certain date each year; ~~providing for the termination of this Act;~~ and generally relating to reporting on veteran and armed services member suicide.

~~BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,~~

~~Article – Health – General~~

~~Section 4-212(a) and (e)~~

~~Annotated Code of Maryland~~

~~(2015 Replacement Volume and 2017 Supplement)~~

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

Article – Health – General

~~Section 4-212(b) and 4-219~~

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2015 Replacement Volume and 2017 Supplement)

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

**Article – Health – General**

~~4-212~~

~~(a) This section does not apply to a fetal death.~~

~~(b) (1) A certificate of death regardless of age of decedent shall be filled out and signed by:~~

~~(i) The medical examiner, if the medical examiner takes charge of the body; or~~

(ii) ~~If the medical examiner does not take charge of the body, the physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner who last attended the deceased.~~

(2) ~~The medical examiner, physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner shall fill in only the following information on the certificate of death:~~

- (i) ~~The name of the deceased;~~
- (ii) ~~The cause of death and medical certification;~~
- (iii) ~~The date and hour of death; [and]~~
- (iv) ~~The place where death occurred; AND~~

(v) ~~IF KNOWN, WHETHER THE DECEASED WAS EVER A MEMBER OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE UNITED STATES.~~

(3) ~~Any other information that is required on the certificate of death regardless of age of decedent shall be filled in:~~

- (i) ~~By the person who has charge of the body; or~~
- (ii) ~~If the State Anatomy Board has charge of the body, by the person who last had charge of the body before it was sent to the State Anatomy Board.~~

(4) ~~The medical certification shall be completed within 24 hours after receipt of the death certificate by the physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner in charge of the patient's care for the illness or condition which resulted in death, except when inquiry is required by the medical examiner.~~

(5) ~~In the absence or inability of the attending physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner or with the attending physician's, physician assistant's, or nurse practitioner's approval, the certificate may be completed by:~~

- (i) ~~The attending physician's associate;~~
- (ii) ~~The chief medical officer or designee of the institution in which death occurred; or~~
- (iii) ~~The physician who performed an autopsy upon the decedent, provided the individual has access to the medical history of the case and death is due to natural causes.~~

(6) ~~The person completing the cause of death and medical certification shall attest to the accuracy by signature or by an approved electronic process.~~

(7) ~~The funeral director or person acting as the funeral director shall in all cases obtain the medical certification from the person responsible for its completion or obtain assurance that the medical certification has been provided to the Secretary by an approved electronic process.~~

(e) ~~Each individual concerned with carrying out this subtitle promptly shall notify the medical examiner if:~~

(1) ~~The deceased was not under treatment by a physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner during the terminal illness;~~

(2) ~~The cause of death is unknown; or~~

(3) ~~The individual considers any of the following conditions to be the cause of death or to have contributed to the death:~~

(i) ~~An accident, including a fall with a fracture or other injury;~~

(ii) ~~Homicide;~~

(iii) ~~Suicide;~~

(iv) ~~Other external manner of death;~~

(v) ~~Alcoholism; or~~

(vi) ~~Criminal or suspected criminal abortion.~~

4-219.

(a) At least annually, the Secretary shall:

(1) Publish a report of vital statistics, including population estimates; and

(2) Print and distribute the report to any official, agency, library, or other person whom the Secretary considers entitled to the report.

(b) In addition to the requirements of subsection (a) of this section, by June 30 of each year the Secretary shall report to the Morbidity, Mortality, and Quality Review Committee established under § 18-107 of this article on the number and cause of death of Maryland children under the age of 1 year who died during the prior calendar year ending December 31st.

(c) In addition to the requirements of subsections (a) and (b) of this section, within 24 hours of notification of a death, the Secretary shall report to the Mortality and Quality Review Committee any death of an individual who at the time of death was:

(1) An individual with a developmental disability, as defined in § 7-101(f) of this article, who resided in or was receiving services from any program or facility licensed or operated by the Developmental Disabilities Administration; or

(2) An individual with a mental illness who resided in or was receiving services from any program or facility approved, licensed, or operated by the Behavioral Health Administration.

**(D) (1) IN ADDITION TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF SUBSECTIONS (A) THROUGH (C) OF THIS SECTION, THE SECRETARY SHALL PUBLISH AN ANNUAL REPORT ON ~~VETERAN SUICIDE~~ THE SUICIDES OF:**

**(I) VETERANS; AND**

**(II) MEMBERS CURRENTLY SERVING IN THE ARMED SERVICES OF THE UNITED STATES.**

**(2) THE REPORT MAY INCLUDE ONLY INFORMATION REGARDING THE AGE, SEX, RACE OR ETHNICITY, NATURE OF SERVICE IF KNOWN, AND METHOD OF SUICIDE OF THE VETERAN OR ARMED SERVICES MEMBER.**

**(3) THE REPORT SHALL INCLUDE AGGREGATE INFORMATION FOR THE LESSER OF:**

**(I) THE PREVIOUS 5 YEARS; OR**

**(II) THE TOTAL NUMBER OF YEARS FOR WHICH INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE.**

**~~(3) (4) ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 1, 2019, AND EACH DECEMBER 1 THEREAFTER EACH YEAR, THE SECRETARY SHALL SUBMIT THE REPORT TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND, IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 2-1246 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE, THE SENATE EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE, AND THE HOUSE HEALTH AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE.~~**

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect October 1, 2018. It shall remain effective for a period of 3 years and 3 months and, at the end of December 31, 2021, 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 24, 2018.**