

SENATE BILL 521

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By: **Senators Smith, Bailey, Cassilly, Eckardt, Ellis, Ferguson, Gallion, Griffith, Hayes, Hough, Jennings, King, Ready, Reilly, Salling, Serafini, Simonaire, and West**

Introduced and read first time: February 4, 2019

Assigned to: Finance

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Veteran Suicide Prevention – Comprehensive Action Plan**

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

13 BY adding to

14 Article – Health – General

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

17 Annotated Code of Maryland

18 (2015 Replacement Volume and 2018 Supplement)

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

21 **Article – Health – General**

22 **SUBTITLE 39. VETERAN SUICIDE PREVENTION.**

23 **13–3901.**

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

6 **(4) VETERAN ADVOCACY GROUPS;**

7 **(5) MEDICAL PROVIDERS; AND**

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

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

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

16 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That, on or before July 1, 2020, the
17 Maryland Department of Health shall report to the Governor and, in accordance with §
18 2-1246 of the State Government Article, the General Assembly on any statutory,
19 administrative, and budgetary changes that would need to be made to implement the
20 initiatives and reforms included in the action plan developed under § 13-3901 of the Health
21 – General Article, as enacted by Section 1 of this Act.

22 SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July
23 1, 2019. It shall remain effective for a period of 10 years and, at the end of June 30, 2029,
24 this Act, with no further action required by the General Assembly, shall be abrogated and
25 of no further force and effect.