



## Maryland SB904/HB1515: The Sheila E. Hixson Behavioral Health Services Matching Grant Program for Service Members and Veterans

### Why this Bill is needed

Community mental health care is vital to the veteran and military family population. Not all veterans are eligible for VA care and the VA does not see family members. In addition, the DoD is faced with ongoing mental health provider shortages and thus many military treatment facilities are sending military family members and veterans to the community for care (National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) 2020). It is vital that these community-based organizations remain healthy and financially sustainable.

### Basic Facts

- 399,000 veterans live in Maryland<sup>1</sup>
- 24,000 Marylanders have been deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan<sup>2</sup>
- 10,000 Maryland veterans are dealing with post-traumatic stress or major depression<sup>3</sup>
- Veterans comprise 18% of all deaths by suicide in Maryland and this group is twice as likely as non-veterans to die by suicide<sup>4</sup>
- 12.4% of all military suicides are by former National Guard and Reserve members who were never federally activated and therefore, not eligible for VA services<sup>5</sup>
- **According to a recent Rand study, the long-term costs for PTSD and major depression in Maryland veterans ranges between \$130-\$200 million. The study estimates that early intervention with evidence-based treatments could save Maryland \$35-\$53 million over two years<sup>6</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Defense

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Defense

<sup>4</sup> VA National Suicide Data Report 2005–2016, (Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention), September 2018

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2019 *National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report*

<sup>6</sup> Tanielian, Terri and Jaycox, Lisa, editors, *Invisible Wounds of War: Psychological and Cognitive Injuries, Their Consequences, and Services to Assist Recovery* (RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, CA), 2018

## **Easterseals Military Family Clinic**

- Total number of Marylanders served (since 08/17): 540
  - Veterans: 282
    - (includes 87 from National Guard & Reserves)
  - Active Duty: 17
  - Adult Family Members: 178
  - Children: 63
  - Male: 45.7%
  - Female: 53.9%
  - Transgender/Unknown <1%
- More than 5,000 clinical hours of service provided to Marylanders (since 08/17)
- 16 employees, including psychologists, social workers, psychiatrist, case manager, intake coordinator, and outreach manager
- Services:
  - In Clinic and Telehealth mental health care (individuals, family, couples, group)
  - Free childcare for clients during their therapy session
  - Case Management
  - Medication Management
  - Food Pantry for clients
  - Transportation assistance for clients to come to therapy
  - Educational Classes and Workshops (financial literacy, legal clinic, disability claims assistance, yoga, home buying seminar, toastmasters)
- Outcomes:
  - Clients felt that their needs were met during therapy: 90%
  - Clients that met their therapy goals upon discharge: 74%
  - Satisfaction at being seen in timely manner: 100%
  - Clients were satisfied with the quality: 100%
  - Clients would recommend the clinic: 90%
- Major Referral sources
  - VA Medical Centers
  - Walter Reed National Military Medical Center
  - Family & Friends
  - Online Searches