

# STATE OF NEW YORK

7538

2021-2022 Regular Sessions

## IN ASSEMBLY

May 13, 2021

Introduced by M. of A. STERN -- read once and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

AN ACT to amend the executive law, in relation to a veteran health care navigator program

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. The executive law is amended by adding a new section 361-a  
2 to read as follows:

3 § 361-a. Veteran health care navigator program. 1. The division shall  
4 undertake a study regarding development and implementation of a veteran  
5 health care navigator program as provided in this section. Such study  
6 shall be completed and reported to the legislature on or before December  
7 thirty-first, two thousand twenty-two.

8 2. The veteran health care navigator program shall employ an adequate  
9 number of veteran health care navigators. Navigators shall be defined as  
10 full-time employees of the division who have direct knowledge of the  
11 veteran communities they serve. Their role shall include efforts to:

12 (a) increase access by veterans and their families to health care  
13 coverage and services;

14 (b) leverage existing resources and structures in areas where veterans  
15 and their families are able to easily access such resources;

16 (c) ensure the needs of veterans and their families are incorporated  
17 in all state efforts to expand access to affordable, quality health  
18 care; and

19 (d) ensure veterans and their families have access to mental health  
20 treatment, including for post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and  
21 suicide prevention.

22 3. The program, when implemented, shall provide the following duties  
23 for veteran health care navigators:

24 (a) identifying all federal and other health benefits, coverage, and  
25 services available to veterans and their families;

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets  
[-] is old law to be omitted.

LBD10702-02-1

1 (b) coordinating with other local, state, and federal departments and  
2 agencies, health care providers, and health insurance programs to help  
3 veterans and their beneficiaries apply for coverage under such programs,  
4 including helping veterans overcome barriers within the health care  
5 system, to ensure enrollment in health plans and effective delivery and  
6 coordination of health services;

7 (c) ensuring that access to mental health coverage, services, and  
8 treatment is a primary focus of their activities under the program;

9 (d) connecting veterans to trained mental health care providers,  
10 including those trained in veteran suicide prevention; and

11 (e) carrying out such other duties as the state director may assign  
12 under the program.

13 4. Upon implementation of the program under this section, when carry-  
14 ing out their duties under the program, the division and the veteran  
15 health care navigators shall coordinate and collaborate with other rele-  
16 vant local, state and federal departments and agencies, including, but  
17 not limited to state and local veteran's service agencies and local  
18 veterans' committees, and the U.S. department of health and human  
19 services.

20 5. As part of the study, the division shall also, in consultation with  
21 the federal department of health and human services, conduct an examina-  
22 tion of all existing health care and veterans' programs to:

23 (a) evaluate whether the needs of veterans and their families are met  
24 by such programs;

25 (b) determine any necessary and appropriate steps that could be taken  
26 to increase access to affordable, quality health care, including by rule  
27 and regulation pursuant to existing statutory authority, or through new  
28 legislation; and

29 (c) evaluate how the veteran health care navigator program proposed  
30 under this section could improve access to affordable, quality health  
31 care for veterans and their families.

32 § 2. This act shall take effect immediately.