

STATE OF NEW YORK

10142

IN ASSEMBLY

February 10, 2026

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

AN ACT to amend the veterans' services law, in relation to veterans health care

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

1 Section 1. The veterans' services law is amended by adding a new
2 section 18-a to read as follows:

3 § 18-a. Veteran health care review. 1. The department, in consultation
4 with the department of health, shall undertake a study regarding veter-
5 an health care as provided in this section. Such study shall be
6 completed and reported to the legislature on or before December thirty-
7 first, two thousand twenty-seven.

8 2. The veteran health care review shall comprehensively study efforts
9 that can be made to improve veterans' health care in the state includ-
10 ing, but not be limited to:

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

13 (b) leveraging existing resources and structures in areas where veter-
14 ans and their families are able to easily access such resources;

15 (c) ensuring the needs of veterans and their families are incorpo-
16 rated in all state efforts to expand access to affordable, quality
17 health care;

18 (d) ensuring veterans and their families have access to mental
19 health treatment, including for post-traumatic stress disorder,
20 depression, anxiety, military sexual trauma, reproductive and mental
21 health conditions, and suicide prevention;

22 (e) increasing primary, reproductive and mental health care services
23 and resources for women veterans;

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

26 (g) more effectively coordinating with other local, state, and federal
27 departments and agencies, health care providers, and health insurance
28 programs to help veterans and their beneficiaries apply for coverage

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

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1 under such programs, including helping veterans overcome barriers within
2 the health care system, to ensure enrollment in health plans and effec-
3 tive delivery and coordination of health services.

4 3. As part of the study, the department shall also:

5 (a) evaluate whether the needs of veterans and their families are met
6 by existing health care and veterans' programs;

7 (b) examine the existing health care services and resources available
8 to women veterans, assess if the existing services and resources are
9 serving the needs of women veterans, and provide recommendations to
10 further expand access to additional health care services and resources
11 for women veterans;

12 (c) provide recommendations for steps that could be taken to increase
13 access to affordable, quality health care;

14 (d) consider the effects of designating health care navigators who
15 would assist veterans in navigating the complexities of accessing health
16 care benefits and services;

17 (e) evaluate the extent to which veterans in the state are experienc-
18 ing delays in the receipt of health care services and ways to provide
19 assistance to those veterans having difficulty receiving timely or
20 adequate care; and

21 (f) evaluate the potential effectiveness of health care choice
22 accounts, deposits into which shall be deductible from the veteran's
23 state personal income tax, for veteran members of the organized militia,
24 particularly those who served on active duty in a combat zone designated
25 by the president of the United States and have a current disability that
26 was incurred or aggravated as a result of such service. For purposes of
27 this section the term "health care choice account" shall mean an indi-
28 vidual savings account, owned by a veteran for the purpose of obtaining
29 health care from the provider of their choice, when after making appli-
30 cation to or attempting to schedule an appointment for health care
31 services through the federal veterans health administration the veteran
32 has been unable to receive such services in a timely manner.

33 § 2. This act shall take effect on the sixtieth day after it shall
34 have become a law.