STATE OF NEW YORK

9645

IN ASSEMBLY

January 21, 2026

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

AN ACT to amend the public health law, in relation to establishing a veteran suicide mortality review board

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

Section 1. The public health law is amended by adding a new article 38-A to read as follows:

ARTICLE 38-A

VETERAN SUICIDE MORTALITY REVIEW BOARD

Section 3850. Veteran suicide mortality review board; establishment and purpose.
3851. Membership.
3852. Powers and duties.
3853. Reporting.
3854. Staffing and Resources.

§ 3850. Veteran suicide mortality review board; establishment and purpose. 1. There is hereby established within the department, in consultation with the office of mental health and the department of veterans' services, a veteran suicide mortality review board, hereinafter "the board".

2. The board shall build upon New York state's participation in federal veteran suicide review programs, including the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration/VA Suicide Mortality Review framework and the Governor's Challenge to Prevent Veteran Suicide, and shall serve as the statewide entity responsible for the multidisciplinary review of suicide deaths among veterans. The purpose of the board is to:

(a) identify trends and systemic factors contributing to veteran suicide;

(b) assess gaps in services, access to care, and institutional practices;

(c) develop evidence-based recommendations for prevention and policy improvement; and

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

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(d) promote collaboration among relevant state, local, and federal agencies.

§ 3851. Membership. 1. The board shall be composed of the following members, each designated by their respective agency or organization:

(a) the commissioner of health, or their designee, who shall be the chair;

(b) the commissioner of mental health, or their designee;

(c) the state commissioner of veterans' services, or their designee;

(d) two representatives of county medical examiners or coroners;

(e) two licensed clinicians experienced in mental health and suicide prevention;

(f) one representative from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, who shall be a non-voting member;

(g) two public health experts with experience in mortality review or epidemiology; and

(h) up to three additional members appointed by the governor with expertise in veterans' issues, community mental health, or suicide prevention.

2. Members shall serve for renewable three year terms, and may serve until a successor is appointed.

§ 3852. Powers and duties. 1. The board shall have the following powers and duties:

(a) Case review of deaths by suicide of individuals identified as veterans, including those recently separated from military service.

(b) Access to all relevant records, including, but not limited to, death certificates, coroner/medical examiner reports, department records and office of mental health records, and relevant division of veterans' services or VA records, subject to confidentiality protections.

(c) Coordination with federal and state partners, including U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and other agencies involved in veteran suicide prevention.

(d) Issue evidence-based recommendations for system improvements, policy, and preventive interventions.

2. All individual case information shall be confidential, not subject to subpoena, and not admissible in civil or criminal proceedings. Aggregate findings may be published in accordance with section thirty-eight hundred fifty-three of this article.

§ 3853. Reporting. 1. The board shall submit an annual report to the governor, the legislature, and the commissioner of health summarizing:

(a) trends in veteran suicides statewide;

(b) systemic gaps or failures contributing to deaths; and

(c) recommendations for policy, practice, and program improvements.

2. The report shall protect individual privacy, presenting only de-identified or aggregated data.

§ 3854. Staffing and resources. The department shall provide administrative support, staffing, and analytical capacity necessary for the board to fulfill its duties. The board may also utilize existing federal or state funding, technical assistance, and data systems, including those provided by U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs programs.

§ 2. This act shall take effect six months after it shall have become a law. The veteran suicide mortality review board established by section one of this act shall convene its first meeting within ninety days of such effective date.