

STATE OF NEW YORK

4201

2023-2024 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

February 13, 2023

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

AN ACT to amend the executive law and 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 executive law is amended by adding a new section 361-a
2 to read as follows:

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

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 care
12 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 incorporated
16 in all state efforts to expand access to affordable, quality health
17 care;

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

21 (e) identifying all federal and other health benefits, coverage, and
22 services available to veterans and their families; and

23 (f) more effectively coordinating with other local, state, and federal
24 departments and agencies, health care providers, and health insurance
25 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 division 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) provide recommendations for steps that could be taken to increase
8 access to affordable, quality health care;

9 (c) consider the effects of designating health care navigators who
10 would assist veterans in navigating the complexities of accessing health
11 care benefits and services;

12 (d) evaluate the extent to which veterans in the state are experienc-
13 ing delays in the receipt of health care services and ways to provide
14 assistance to those veterans having difficulty receiving timely or
15 adequate care; and

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

28 § 2. The veterans' services law is amended by adding a new section
29 18-a to read as follows:

30 § 18-a. Veteran health care review. 1. The division, in consultation
31 with the department of health, shall undertake a study regarding veter-
32 an health care as provided in this section. Such study shall be
33 completed and reported to the legislature on or before December thirty-
34 first, two thousand twenty-five.

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

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

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

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

45 (d) ensuring veterans and their families have access to mental
46 health treatment, including for post-traumatic stress disorder,
47 depression, and suicide prevention;

48 (e) identifying all federal and other health benefits, coverage, and
49 services available to veterans and their families; and

50 (f) more effectively coordinating with other local, state, and federal
51 departments and agencies, health care providers, and health insurance
52 programs to help veterans and their beneficiaries apply for coverage
53 under such programs, including helping veterans overcome barriers within
54 the health care system, to ensure enrollment in health plans and effec-
55 tive delivery and coordination of health services.

56 3. As part of the study, the division shall also:

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

3 (b) provide recommendations for steps that could be taken to increase
4 access to affordable, quality health care;

5 (c) consider the effects of designating health care navigators who
6 would assist veterans in navigating the complexities of accessing health
7 care benefits and services;

8 (d) evaluate the extent to which veterans in the state are experienc-
9 ing delays in the receipt of health care services and ways to provide
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11 adequate care; and

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14 state personal income tax, for veteran members of the organized militia,
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19 vidual savings account, owned by a veteran for the purpose of obtaining
20 health care from the provider of their choice, when after making appli-
21 cation to or attempting to schedule an appointment for health care
22 services through the federal veterans health administration the veteran
23 has been unable to receive such services in a timely manner.

24 § 3. This act shall take effect on the sixtieth day after it shall
25 have become a law; provided, however, that section two of this act shall
26 take effect on the same date and in the same manner as section 2 of part
27 PP of chapter 56 of the laws of 2022 takes effect.