

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2017

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HOUSE BILL 914

Short Title: Enhance Suicide Prevention Awareness & Svcs. (Public)

Sponsors: Representative Cunningham.

*For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.*

Referred to: Appropriations

April 26, 2017

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT REQUIRING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES TO ESTABLISH AND ADMINISTER A STATEWIDE SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAM FOR FIRST RESPONDERS AND VETERANS; APPROPRIATING FUNDS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, DIVISION OF MENTAL HEALTH, DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES, AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES, FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE STATEWIDE SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAM FOR FIRST RESPONDERS AND VETERANS; PROVIDING SPACE ON THE INCOME TAX RETURN FOR INDIVIDUALS TO MAKE DONATIONS TO SUPPORT THE STATEWIDE SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAM FOR FIRST RESPONDERS AND VETERANS; AND ESTABLISHING A VETERANS REINTEGRATION TASK FORCE TO DEVELOP A STATEWIDE ACTION PLAN FOR ASSISTING ACTIVE DUTY SERVICE MEMBERS, VETERANS, AND THEIR FAMILIES.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**PART I. ESTABLISHMENT OF STATEWIDE SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAM FOR FIRST RESPONDERS AND VETERANS**

**SECTION 1.(a)** Article 3A of Chapter 122C of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

**"§ 122C-82. Department to establish statewide suicide prevention program for first responders and veterans.**

(a) The following definitions apply in this section:

(1) First responder. – Any individual who is responsible for going immediately to the scene of an accident or emergency to provide assistance, including law enforcement officers and fire, rescue, and emergency medical services personnel.

(2) Veteran. – Any individual who may be entitled to any benefits or rights under the laws of the United States, by reason of service in the Armed Forces of the United States.

(b) The Department shall establish and administer a statewide suicide prevention program to address suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention among first responders and veterans. The program shall include at least all of the following components:



- 1           (1)    Development and delivery of evidence-based suicide risk assessment tools,  
2           training, and resources to licensed health professionals, first responders, and  
3           community-based coalitions.
- 4           (2)    Town hall meetings for building community-based suicide prevention  
5           strategies.
- 6           (3)    Suicide prevention gatekeeper training.
- 7           (4)    Training to identify warning signs and to manage an at-risk individual's  
8           crisis.
- 9           (5)    Evidence-based intervention training.
- 10          (6)    Intervention skills training.
- 11          (7)    Postvention training to address mental health intervention after a suicide  
12          attempt or death in order to prevent or contain contagion.
- 13          (8)    Establishment of a toll-free hotline for individuals to anonymously report  
14          and seek assistance for suicidal ideation for the individual calling the  
15          toll-free hotline or for another individual.
- 16          (9)    Development of a statewide suicide prevention application for mobile  
17          devices that can be optimized for computer tablets to do the following:
- 18           a.    Help providers integrate suicide prevention strategies into their  
19           practice and address suicide risk among their patients.
- 20           b.    Enable individuals who are at risk for committing suicide,  
21           individuals who are experiencing suicidal ideation, or individuals  
22           who have recognized suicidal ideation in another individual, to  
23           anonymously report and seek suicide prevention assistance.
- 24          (c)    The Department shall designate a suicide prevention program coordinator whose  
25          responsibilities shall include at least all of the following:
- 26           (1)    Coordinate suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention programs,  
27           services, and efforts within the State for first responders and veterans,  
28           including those offered by the following entities:
- 29           a.    Local management entities/managed care organizations.
- 30           b.    Public and private elementary, middle, and high schools.
- 31           c.    Law enforcement agencies.
- 32           d.    Fire, rescue, and emergency medical services providers.
- 33           e.    State agencies.
- 34           (2)    Remain abreast of evidence-based practices and programs and emerging best  
35           practices and programs for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention.
- 36           (3)    Develop a model program for training and resources related to current best  
37           practices in suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention.
- 38           (4)    Design, coordinate, and oversee a public awareness suicide prevention  
39           campaign targeting first responders and veterans.
- 40           (5)    Compile data measuring the effectiveness of suicide prevention,  
41           intervention, and postvention programs implemented as part of the statewide  
42           suicide prevention program for first responders and veterans established  
43           pursuant to subsection (a) of this section.
- 44           (6)    Beginning December 1, 2018, annually report to the Secretary of Health and  
45           Human Services and the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health  
46           and Human Services on the data compiled pursuant to subdivision (5) of this  
47           subsection.
- 48          (d)    The Department may adopt rules as necessary to implement the provisions of this  
49          section."

50           **SECTION 1.(b)** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of  
51          Health and Human Services, Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and

1 Substance Abuse Services, the sum of \_\_\_ dollars (\$) in recurring funds and \_\_\_ dollars (\$) in  
2 nonrecurring funds for the 2017-2018 fiscal year and the sum of \_\_\_ dollars (\$) in recurring  
3 funds for the 2018-2019 fiscal year. These funds shall be used exclusively to implement the  
4 statewide suicide prevention program for first responders and veterans authorized by  
5 G.S. 122C-82, as enacted by this act, as follows:

- 6 (1) The sum of \_\_\_ dollars (\$) in recurring funds for each year of the 2017-2019  
7 fiscal biennium shall be used to establish and administer the program.
- 8 (2) The sum of \_\_\_ dollars (\$) in recurring funds for each year of the 2017-2019  
9 fiscal biennium shall be used to fund one permanent, full-time equivalent  
10 suicide prevention program coordinator position within the Division of  
11 Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services  
12 of the Department of Health and Human Services, to fulfill the  
13 responsibilities described in G.S. 122C-82(b), as enacted by this act.
- 14 (3) The sum of \_\_\_ dollars (\$) in nonrecurring funds for the 2017-2018 fiscal  
15 year shall be used to establish a toll-free hotline for individuals to  
16 anonymously report and seek assistance for suicidal ideation, as described in  
17 G.S. 122C-82(a)(8), as enacted by this act.
- 18 (4) The sum of \_\_\_ dollars (\$) in nonrecurring funds for the 2017-2018 fiscal  
19 year shall be used to develop a statewide suicide prevention application for  
20 mobile devices that can be optimized for computer tablets, as described in  
21 G.S. 122C-82(a)(9), as enacted by this act.

22 **SECTION 1.(c)** This section becomes effective July 1, 2017.

## 23 24 **PART II. CHECKOFF DONATIONS FOR STATEWIDE SUICIDE PREVENTION** 25 **PROGRAM FOR FIRST RESPONDERS AND VETERANS**

26 **SECTION 2.(a)** Article 9 of Chapter 105 of the General Statutes is amended by  
27 adding a new section to read:

### 28 **"§ 105-269.8. Contribution by individual for statewide suicide prevention program for** 29 **first responders and veterans.**

30 An individual entitled to a refund of income taxes under Part 2 of Article 4 of this Chapter  
31 may elect to contribute all or part of the refund to be used for the statewide suicide prevention  
32 program for first responders and veterans established under G.S. 122C-82. The Secretary shall  
33 provide appropriate language and space on the individual income tax form in which to make  
34 the election. The Secretary shall include in the income tax instructions an explanation that the  
35 contributions will be used for the statewide suicide prevention program for first responders and  
36 veterans only. The election becomes irrevocable upon filing the individual's income tax return  
37 for the taxable year.

38 The Secretary shall transmit the contributions made pursuant to this section to the State  
39 Treasurer to be distributed for the statewide suicide prevention program for first responders and  
40 veterans. The State Treasurer shall distribute the contributions to the Department of Health and  
41 Human Services, Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse  
42 Services, for the statewide suicide prevention program for first responders and veterans. Funds  
43 distributed pursuant to this section shall be used only for suicide prevention for first responders  
44 and veterans and shall be used in accordance with the policies and procedures for the statewide  
45 suicide prevention program for first responders and veterans."

46 **SECTION 2.(b)** The General Assembly finds that the funds generated by this act  
47 are intended to be additional funding for suicide prevention and are not intended to replace  
48 current appropriations for suicide prevention.

49 **SECTION 2.(c)** This section is effective for taxable years beginning on or after  
50 January 1, 2017, and expires for taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2021.

1 **PART III. CREATION OF VETERANS REINTEGRATION TASK FORCE WITHIN**  
2 **DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AND MILITARY AFFAIRS**

3 **SECTION 3.** Article 14 of Chapter 143B of the General Statutes is amended by  
4 adding a new section to read:

5 **"§ 143B-1222.10. Veterans Reintegration Task Force; creation, powers, and duties.**

6 (a) The Veterans Reintegration Task Force is created within the Department of  
7 Veterans and Military Affairs.

8 (b) The Task Force shall have 25 members. The Governor shall appoint the Chair, and  
9 the Vice-Chair shall be elected by the Task Force. The Secretary of the North Carolina  
10 Department of Veterans and Military Affairs, the Secretary of the North Carolina Department  
11 of Health and Human Services, and the Director of the Division of Mental Health,  
12 Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services in the North Carolina Department  
13 of Health and Human Services, or their designees, shall be members of the Task Force.  
14 Appointments to the Task Force shall be made as follows:

15 (1) By the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the President Pro  
16 Tempore of the Senate, as follows:

17 a. Two members of the Senate.

18 b. Two representatives of organizations serving veterans.

19 c. Two veterans or dependents of veterans.

20 (2) By the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Speaker of the  
21 House of Representatives, as follows:

22 a. Two members of the House of Representatives.

23 b. Two representatives of organizations serving veterans.

24 c. Two veterans or dependents of veterans.

25 (3) By the Governor, as follows:

26 a. A representative of the Division of Workforce Solutions of the North  
27 Carolina Department of Commerce.

28 b. Two practicing mental health professionals.

29 c. Two representatives of an organization serving veterans.

30 d. Two veterans or dependents of veterans.

31 e. Three members at large.

32 (c) Each appointing authority shall assure insofar as possible that its appointees to the  
33 Task Force reflect the composition of the North Carolina population with regard to ethnic,  
34 racial, age, gender, and religious composition.

35 (d) The General Assembly and the Governor shall make their appointments to the Task  
36 Force not later than 30 days after the adjournment of the 2017 Regular Session of the 2017  
37 General Assembly. A vacancy on the Task Force shall be filled by the original appointing  
38 authority, using the criteria set out in this section for the original appointment.

39 (e) The Task Force shall meet not more than twice annually at the call of the Chair.

40 (f) Members of the Task Force shall receive per diem and necessary travel and  
41 subsistence expenses in accordance with G.S. 120-3.1, 138-5 and 138-6, as applicable.

42 (g) A majority of the Task Force shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of its  
43 business.

44 (h) The Task Force may use funds allocated to it to establish two positions and for other  
45 expenditures needed to assist the Task Force in carrying out its duties.

46 (i) The Task Force shall study and develop a statewide action plan on the following  
47 issues as they impact active duty service members, veterans, and their dependents:

48 (1) Reintegrating from military to civilian status.

49 (2) Regaining employment.

50 (3) Managing finances.

51 (4) Pursuing higher education.

- 1           (5)   Obtaining assistance with deployment and service related health and mental
- 2                   health issues, including suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention
- 3                   services.
- 4           (6)   Coordinating resources across State and local governments to assist service
- 5                   members, veterans, and their families.
- 6       (j)   The Task Force shall submit a report to the Governor and the General Assembly by
- 7   December 1, 2018, and a report to each subsequent regular legislative session within one week
- 8   of its convening."

10 **PART IV. EFFECTIVE DATE**

11           **SECTION 4.** Except as otherwise provided, this act is effective when it becomes  
12 law.