
SECOND SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1181

State of Washington

67th Legislature

2022 Regular Session

By House Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Orwall, Boehnke, Callan, Leavitt, Davis, Dolan, Valdez, Young, Riccelli, Lekanoff, Barkis, Peterson, Shewmake, Bronoske, Macri, and Morgan)

READ FIRST TIME 02/07/22.

1 AN ACT Relating to establishing programs and measures to prevent
2 suicide among veterans and military members; adding new sections to
3 chapter 43.60A RCW; adding a new section to chapter 18.130 RCW;
4 adding a new section to chapter 43.70 RCW; adding a new section to
5 chapter 46.18 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 74.04 RCW; adding
6 a new section to chapter 9.41 RCW; creating new sections; providing
7 an effective date; and providing an expiration date.

8 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

9 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) Suicide is a public health issue that
10 affects many Washington families and communities daily. Over the last
11 10 years, Washington state has been at the forefront of suicide
12 prevention, investing more in upstream suicide prevention strategies
13 and supports with the goal of a noteworthy reduction in suicide by
14 2025.

15 (2) At the request of the governor, in 2020 Washington
16 stakeholders engaged in a national and statewide initiative to end
17 veteran and military member suicide. This initiative culminated in a
18 new state plan to educate providers and help them address the unique
19 needs of veterans and military members, particularly those in
20 transition to civilian life; and to provide resources and supports

1 including improved lethal means safety training. The purpose of this
2 act is to support the implementation of that plan.

3 (3) Service members, veterans, and their families are at a higher
4 risk of being affected by suicide as experiences prior to enlistment,
5 during service, and transition from service can contribute to
6 suicidal thoughts and behaviors.

7 (4) Washington is home to 544,290 veterans, 60,699 active duty
8 service members, 17,941 guard and reserve service members, and
9 2,000,000 military and veteran family members. Although veterans
10 themselves make up only seven percent of the Washington population,
11 they account for 19 percent of total suicides in the state. Nearly
12 1,000 veterans have died by suicide in Washington state over the last
13 five years. More than two-thirds of veterans who died by suicide in
14 Washington used a firearm.

15 (5) Family members of veterans who die by suicide are at higher
16 risk for future suicide due to the exposure of experiencing suicide
17 loss. Research shows for every suicide that occurs, 135 people suffer
18 from the effects either directly or indirectly, meaning veteran
19 suicides impact a community of 2,600,000 people.

20 (6) There is no one path to suicide, but life experiences, moral
21 injury, trauma, culture, and health can play a major role in suicidal
22 behavior. Military and veteran culture in particular includes stigma
23 around mental wellness and help-seeking behavior, emphasizes
24 reliability on group cohesion, and facilitates access,
25 comfortability, and familiarity with lethal means such as firearms.
26 Additionally, a significant number of veterans do not seek care
27 within the veterans administration system.

28 (7) The legislature intends to address the tragedy of suicide
29 amongst veterans, military members, and their families through
30 support of professionals and community and peer organizations serving
31 veterans, cultural changes that support help-seeking behaviors, and
32 investments in education, training, prevention, and care.

33 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 43.60A
34 RCW to read as follows:

35 (1) There is created in the department a suicide prevention
36 community-based services grant program. The purpose of the grant
37 program is to provide suicide prevention, peer support, and other
38 assistance to at-risk and transitioning veterans and military members
39 and their families in their communities.

1 (2) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for the
2 specific purposes provided in this section and amounts disbursed from
3 the veterans and military members suicide prevention account created
4 in section 3 of this act, the department, in consultation with the
5 forefront suicide prevention center, must establish a process to
6 receive, review, process, and award grants to organizations,
7 including nonprofit and peer support community programs, that address
8 veterans, military members, and their families who may be at risk of
9 suicide and other mental health crises. Priority should be given to
10 organizations using peer support models that use evidence-based,
11 research-based, or promising practices.

12 (3) The department shall report to the legislature annually
13 beginning July 1, 2023, on grant recipients, number of veterans and
14 military members served, and the types of services offered by grant
15 recipients.

16 (4) The forefront suicide prevention center shall evaluate the
17 effectiveness of each grant program recipient providing suicide
18 prevention and peer support services to veterans, military members,
19 and their families who may be at risk of suicide and other mental
20 health crises.

21 (5) For the purposes of this section, "forefront suicide
22 prevention center" means the University of Washington's forefront
23 suicide prevention center of excellence.

24 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 43.60A
25 RCW to read as follows:

26 (1) The veterans and military members suicide prevention account
27 is created in the custody of the state treasurer. The account shall
28 consist of funds appropriated by the legislature, revenues received
29 from the prevent veteran suicide emblem under section 8 of this act,
30 and all receipts from gifts, grants, bequests, devises, or other
31 donations from public and private sources to support veterans and
32 military members suicide prevention measures. Expenditures from the
33 account may be used only for the purposes provided in subsection (3)
34 of this section. Only the director or the director's designee may
35 authorize expenditures from the account. The account is subject to
36 allotment procedures under chapter 43.88 RCW, but an appropriation is
37 not required for expenditures.

38 (2) (a) The department may request and accept nondedicated
39 contributions, grants, or gifts in cash or otherwise, and voluntary

1 donations for deposit into the account, including funds generated by
2 voluntary donations under (b) of this subsection.

3 (b) The department may accept, for deposit into the account,
4 voluntary donations from persons who are: (i) Applying for a
5 concealed pistol license or renewal of a concealed pistol license; or
6 (ii) undergoing a background check under chapter 9.41 RCW in
7 connection with the purchase of a firearm from a firearms dealer. The
8 department shall coordinate with local law enforcement agencies, the
9 department of licensing, and firearms dealers licensed under chapter
10 9.41 RCW to develop a form and process for publicizing and collecting
11 voluntary donations under this subsection. The department and the
12 department of licensing shall post educational information regarding
13 the voluntary donation provisions of this section on their websites.

14 (3) All moneys deposited into the account must be used for
15 activities that are dedicated to the benefit of veteran and military
16 member suicide education and prevention including, but not limited
17 to: (a) Expanding the department's peer corps program; and (b)
18 providing programs, peer support, and services that assist veterans
19 and military members in addressing mental health and wellness impacts
20 of military service, trauma, moral injury, and transition to civilian
21 life. Funds may also be used for the suicide prevention community-
22 based services grant program established in section 2 of this act.
23 Funds from the account may not be used to supplant existing funds
24 received by the department nor shall grant recipients use the funds
25 to supplant existing funding.

26 (4) For the purposes of this section the following definitions
27 apply:

28 (a) "Veteran" has the same meaning as provided in RCW 41.04.005
29 and 41.04.007.

30 (b) "Military members" means actively serving members of the
31 national guard or reserves, or active duty military personnel.

32 (c) "Account" means the veterans and military members suicide
33 prevention account.

34 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A new section is added to chapter 43.60A
35 RCW to read as follows:

36 Beginning December 2022, subject to the availability of amounts
37 appropriated for this specific purpose, the governor's challenge team
38 and service members, veterans, and their families suicide prevention
39 advisory committee shall report to the legislature on a biannual

1 basis regarding implementation of the plan developed by the
2 committee.

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** A new section is added to chapter 43.60A
4 RCW to read as follows:

5 Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this
6 specific purpose, the department shall:

7 (1) Create and maintain a database of information on nonprofit,
8 for-profit, city, county, state, and federal organizations,
9 providers, and resources that address the mental health, well-being,
10 and suicide prevention of veterans, military members, and their
11 families. The department shall establish criteria for inclusion in
12 the database by July 1, 2022. The department must make the database
13 accessible on its website to veterans, military members, and their
14 families by July 1, 2023;

15 (2) Provide suicide prevention education training and information
16 for veterans, military members, and their families that is accessible
17 through the internet; and

18 (3) By December 1, 2023, create, in consultation with the
19 suicide-safer homes task force, a web-based application to be shared
20 by state agencies and primary care providers with veterans, military
21 members, and their families to provide applicable information and
22 resources including but not limited to benefits, mental health
23 resources, and lethal means safety information.

24 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** A new section is added to chapter 18.130
25 RCW to read as follows:

26 (1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this
27 specific purpose, the department shall consult with the department of
28 veterans affairs to create educational materials informing health
29 care providers regulated under this chapter about the availability of
30 the nationwide 988 phone number for individuals in crisis to connect
31 with suicide prevention and mental health crisis counselors. The
32 educational materials must include information about the veterans
33 crisis line for veterans and service members, and, beginning July 1,
34 2023, information about the resources developed under section 5 of
35 this act.

36 (2) The department shall:

37 (a) Determine the health professions to which this section shall
38 apply; and

1 (b) Collaborate with the corresponding disciplining authority
2 under RCW 18.130.020 to ensure that the educational materials are
3 distributed electronically to appropriate licensed health care
4 providers when a provider renews his or her license.

5 (3) Beginning July 1, 2023, all health care providers are
6 strongly encouraged to inquire with new patients entering care
7 whether the patient is a veteran, member of the military, or a family
8 member of a veteran or member of the military. If the patient
9 responds in the affirmative, the provider is encouraged to share the
10 educational materials created under this section with the patient.

11 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** A new section is added to chapter 43.70
12 RCW to read as follows:

13 (1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this
14 specific purpose, a suicide-safer homes task force is established to
15 raise public awareness and increase suicide prevention education
16 among new partners who are in key positions to help reduce suicide.
17 The task force shall be administered and staffed by the department of
18 veterans affairs. To the extent possible, the task force membership
19 should include representatives from geographically diverse and
20 priority populations, including tribal populations.

21 (2) The suicide-safer homes task force shall be cochaired by the
22 director, or the director's designee, of the department of veterans
23 affairs and the director, or the director's designee, of the
24 forefront suicide prevention center and also consist of the following
25 members:

26 (a) Two representatives of suicide prevention organizations,
27 selected by the cochairs of the task force;

28 (b) Two representatives of the firearms industry, selected by the
29 cochairs of the task force;

30 (c) Two individuals who are suicide attempt survivors or who have
31 experienced suicide loss, selected by the cochairs of the task force;

32 (d) Two representatives of law enforcement agencies, selected by
33 the cochairs of the task force;

34 (e) One representative from the department of health;

35 (f) One representative from the department of fish and wildlife;

36 (g) One individual representing veterans;

37 (h) One member of a Washington or federally recognized Indian
38 tribe;

39 (i) Two veterans;

1 (j) One representative of the national rifle association;
2 (k) One representative of the Second Amendment foundation;
3 (l) One representative of a nonprofit organization working on gun
4 safety issues;
5 (m) One representative of a national firearms trade association;
6 (n) One representative of a Washington state pharmacy
7 association; and
8 (o) No more than five other interested parties, selected by the
9 cochairs of the task force.

10 (3) The department of veterans affairs shall convene the initial
11 meeting of the task force.

12 (4) The task force shall:

13 (a) Develop and prepare to disseminate online trainings on
14 suicide awareness and prevention for firearms dealers and their
15 employees and firearm range owners and their employees;

16 (b) Partner with medical providers, firearms dealers, firearms
17 ranges, and pharmacies to develop and distribute suicide awareness
18 and prevention messages for posters and brochures;

19 (c) In consultation with the department of fish and wildlife,
20 develop strategies for creating and disseminating suicide awareness
21 and prevention information for hunting safety classes, including
22 messages to parents that can be shared during online registration, in
23 either follow-up email communications, or in writing, or both;

24 (d) Create a website that will be a clearinghouse for the newly
25 created suicide awareness and prevention materials developed by the
26 task force;

27 (e) Continue to support medical providers with suicide prevention
28 and awareness work through the dissemination of collateral education
29 programs;

30 (f) Allocate funding towards the purchase of lock boxes for
31 dissemination via the forefront suicide prevention center's TeleSAFER
32 program;

33 (g) Develop and direct advocacy efforts with firearms dealers to
34 pair suicide awareness and prevention training with distribution of
35 safe storage devices;

36 (h) Partner with a statewide pharmacy association to market and
37 promote medication disposal kits and safe storage devices;

38 (i) Train health care providers on suicide awareness and
39 prevention, paired with distribution of medication disposal kits and
40 safe storage devices; and

1 (j) Train local law enforcement officers on suicide awareness and
2 prevention, paired with distribution of medication disposal kits and
3 safe storage devices.

4 (5) The forefront suicide prevention center shall provide subject
5 matter expertise, technical and programmatic support, and
6 consultation and evaluation to the task force.

7 (6) Beginning December 1, 2022, the task force shall annually
8 report to the legislature on the status of its work.

9 (7) This section expires July 1, 2024.

10 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 8.** A new section is added to chapter 46.18
11 RCW to read as follows:

12 (1) The general public may purchase a prevent veteran suicide
13 emblem for a prescribed fee set by the department. The emblem must be
14 displayed on license plates in the manner described by the
15 department, existing vehicular registration procedures, and current
16 laws.

17 (2) The department, in creating the prevent veteran suicide
18 emblem, must consult with the department of veterans affairs on the
19 design of the emblem. The emblem must incorporate the 988 suicide
20 prevention hotline or its successor.

21 (3) Revenues from the prevent veteran suicide emblem must be
22 deposited into the veterans and military members suicide prevention
23 account created in section 3 of this act.

24 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 9.** A new section is added to chapter 74.04
25 RCW to read as follows:

26 During the application process for public assistance benefits,
27 the department shall inquire of each applicant whether he or she has
28 ever served in the United States military services or is a family or
29 household member of someone who has ever served in the United States
30 military services. If the applicant answers in the affirmative, the
31 department shall provide the applicant with information on how to
32 contact the Washington department of veterans affairs to inquire as
33 to whether the applicant may be eligible for any benefits, services,
34 or programs offered to veterans, military members, or their families.

35 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 10.** A new section is added to chapter 9.41
36 RCW to read as follows:

1 (1) In order to better prevent suicide by veterans, military
2 members, and their families, an expansion of safe storage of firearms
3 and reduced access to lethal means in the community is encouraged.

4 (2) A dealer who provides a service of allowing a person to
5 temporarily store a firearm on the dealer's premises in a storage
6 locker, box, or container that is locked and not accessible to the
7 dealer does not thereby create a special relationship, for civil
8 liability purposes, between the dealer and the person who temporarily
9 stores the firearm on the dealer's premises.

10 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 11.** Section 8 of this act takes effect
11 October 1, 2022.

12 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 12.** If specific funding for the purposes of
13 this act, referencing this act by bill or chapter number, is not
14 provided by June 30, 2022, in the omnibus appropriations act, this
15 act is null and void.

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