

**SUBSTITUTE FOR  
HOUSE BILL NO. 5276**

A bill to create the office of mental health and suicide prevention in the Michigan veterans affairs agency and provide for its powers and duties; and to provide for the powers and duties of certain state governmental officers and entities.

**THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF MICHIGAN ENACT:**

1           Sec. 1. This act may be cited as the "protecting veterans  
2 mental health act".

3           Sec. 3. As used in this act:

4           (a) "Agency" means the Michigan veterans affairs agency.

5           (b) "Department" means the department of military and veterans  
6 affairs.

7           (c) "Manager" means the manager of the office appointed under  
8 section 5.

1 (d) "Office" means the office of mental health and suicide  
2 prevention created in section 5.

3 (e) "Veteran" means that term as defined in section 1 of 1965  
4 PA 190, MCL 35.61.

5 Sec. 5. (1) The office of mental health and suicide prevention  
6 is created in the agency. The director of the agency shall appoint  
7 an individual who has career experience, as determined by the  
8 director of the agency, in veteran mental health and substance use  
9 disorders as the manager of the office. The manager is not exempt  
10 from the state classified civil service. The manager shall report  
11 to any official designated by the director of the agency. The  
12 director of the agency may assign additional responsibilities to  
13 the manager in addition to the responsibilities described in this  
14 act.

15 (2) The office shall collect data on all of the following in  
16 this state:

17 (a) Veteran mental health and substance use disorders,  
18 including, but not limited to, statistics related to post-traumatic  
19 stress disorder, traumatic brain injuries, substance use disorder  
20 and addiction, and suicide and suicidal ideation.

21 (b) Efforts by the department to address veteran mental health  
22 and substance use disorders described in subdivision (a).

23 (c) Efforts undertaken and data collected through the  
24 interagency agreement with the department of health and human  
25 services under section 322 of the Michigan military act, 1967 PA  
26 150, MCL 32.722.

27 (d) The yearly strategic goals of the office.

28 (e) Utilization of the buddy-to-buddy program created in  
29 section 323 of the Michigan military act, 1967 PA 150, MCL 32.723.

1 (3) By not later than March 1 of each year, the office shall  
2 submit a report to the director of the agency and the standing  
3 committees of the house of representatives and senate on military  
4 and veterans affairs on the data collected under subsection (2) and  
5 the information described in section 6(6).

6 (4) The office may, on appropriation and at the direction of  
7 the director of the agency, administer grants to local units of  
8 government, nonprofit organizations, or other entities, as  
9 determined by the director of the agency, in support of programs  
10 and resources for service members and veterans consistent with this  
11 act.

12 (5) Any data collected under this act must not include  
13 personally identifying information.

14 (6) The office shall, to the best of its ability, ensure that  
15 data collected under this act is timely and accurate, including  
16 data collected by the office for programs run by the office,  
17 agency, or department or data aggregated from reputable sources  
18 outside of the office, agency, or department.

19 (7) A writing prepared, owned, used, in the possession of, or  
20 retained by the agency, department, or office in the performance of  
21 an official function under this act and that contains information  
22 specific to an individual service member or veteran is not subject  
23 to disclosure under the freedom of information act, 1976 PA 442,  
24 MCL 15.231 to 15.246.

25 Sec. 6. (1) The office shall create and publish a mental  
26 health and wellness resource guide. The office shall make the  
27 resource guide available on request at no cost to the requestor.

28 (2) The resource guide must include, but is not limited to,  
29 both of the following:

1 (a) A self-assessment and scoring rubric as described in  
2 subsection (3).

3 (b) Available mental health treatment resources and all of the  
4 following information for each organization or provider listed:

5 (i) Organization or provider name.

6 (ii) Address.

7 (iii) Phone number.

8 (iv) Website, if applicable.

9 (v) Email address, if applicable.

10 (vi) Brief summary of services and resources provided.

11 (c) Mental health signs and symptoms checklist.

12 (3) The office shall adopt a mental health self-assessment and  
13 scoring rubric that includes questions that allow a military  
14 servicemember or veteran to have an easy-to-understand and basic  
15 view of that military servicemember's or veteran's current mental  
16 health status. The self-assessment must contain a disclaimer that  
17 the self-assessment is for informational purposes only and does not  
18 replace a full evaluation conducted by a licensed mental health or  
19 medical professional. The office may use an existing product as the  
20 self-assessment and scoring rubric if it meets the requirements of  
21 this subsection or may design and create a self-assessment and  
22 scoring rubric that meets the requirements of this subsection.

23 (4) In addition to including the self-assessment and scoring  
24 rubric in the resource guide, the office may offer the self-  
25 assessment and scoring rubric as a standalone resource if the  
26 office considers it necessary. If the office offers the self-  
27 assessment and scoring rubric as a standalone resource, it must do  
28 so at no charge to the user.

29 (5) The office may list any resource in the resource guide

1 under subsection (2)(b) that the office considers beneficial but  
2 may not include only resources connected directly or indirectly to  
3 the agency or department.

4 (6) The office must, in the report required under section  
5 5(3), specify the number of resource guides it distributes each  
6 year and the types of organizations in which the resource guides  
7 are distributed based on the following or similar categories:

8 (a) Veteran service organizations.

9 (b) Local units of government.

10 (c) Nonprofit organizations.

11 (d) State or federal departments or agencies.

12 (e) Department or agency sections.

13 (f) For-profit businesses or organizations.

14 (g) Other.

15 (7) The office shall update the resource guide as it considers  
16 necessary but not less than once every 3 years.

17 (8) As used in this section, "resource guide" means the mental  
18 health and wellness resource guide created under subsection (1).

19 Sec. 7. (1) In addition to any other powers and  
20 responsibilities granted to the manager under this act or delegated  
21 by the director of the agency, the manager shall oversee and  
22 supervise both of the following programs:

23 (a) The transition bridge program created in section 321 of  
24 the Michigan military act, 1967 PA 150, MCL 32.721.

25 (b) In conjunction with the department of health and human  
26 services, the interagency agreement on mental health resources and  
27 outreach created under section 332 of the Michigan military act,  
28 1967 PA 150, MCL 32.722.

29 (2) The manager may, at the manager's discretion and with the

1 approval of the director of the agency, delegate day-to-day  
2 administrative or operational functions of the programs listed  
3 under subsection (1) to other officials in the agency or department  
4 as the manager considers appropriate. However, the manager retains  
5 the powers and duties of supervising, data collecting, and  
6 reporting, and must give final approval for implementing and  
7 changing the programs listed under subsection (1) and those  
8 assigned to the manager by the director of the agency.

9       Sec. 8. The manager shall serve as a public point of contact  
10 for servicemembers, veterans, and the families of servicemembers  
11 and veterans and other stakeholders on mental health, suicide  
12 prevention, and related resources and information throughout this  
13 state's servicemember and veteran population. The manager shall be  
14 a primary point of contact within the agency and department to  
15 ensure that programs, resources, and outreach efforts undertaken by  
16 the agency or the department related to mental health and suicide  
17 prevention are designed and implemented in a manner that ensures  
18 those efforts are able to increase awareness and improve outcomes  
19 for servicemembers, veterans, and the families of servicemembers  
20 and veterans.

21       Enacting section 1. This act does not take effect unless all  
22 of the following bills of the 102nd Legislature are enacted into  
23 law:

24       (a) House Bill No. 5277.

25       (b) House Bill No. 5279.

26       (c) House Bill No. 5280.

27       (d) Senate Bill No. \_\_\_\_\_ or House Bill No. 5720 (request no.  
28 05797'24).