

HB 179 / SB 326: Services for Veterans and Their Families

A proactive, coordinated, dedicated approach to connect Veterans and their families to mental health services.

What is the purpose of HB 179/ SB 326?

- ▶ Services for Veterans and Their Families creates the Florida Veteran's Care Coordination Program to provide statewide, dedicated behavioral healthcare referral services to veterans and their families through Florida's 211 Network modeled after the pilot program.
- ▶ The bill requires the program to provide peer support, suicide assessment, treatment and resource coordination, and the program team to track and follow up with callers and advertise the program.

Why is HB 179 / SB 326 necessary?

- ▶ PTSD attributed to combat has affected between 2% and 17% of all U.S. military veterans returning from combat since the Vietnam War. In 2012, the VA released a report detailing veteran suicide deaths from 1999 to 2009. During that 10-year span, veterans comprised approximately 22.2% of all suicides.
- ▶ The Crisis Center of Tampa Bay Pilot Project handled 7,343 calls from 2016-2017.
- ▶ Florida has the nation's third largest veteran population with more than 1.6 million veterans - 12% of the state's population 18 and older.

How would HB 179 / SB 326 work?

- ▶ The bill requires the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to contract with the managing entities to enter into agreements with Florida 211 Network participants to provide program services.
- ▶ The program will provide veterans and their families dedicated behavioral healthcare referral services, specifically mental health and substance abuse services, through the existing 211 infrastructure.
- ▶ DCF is to model the program after the pilot project conducted in 2014 by the Crisis Center of Tampa Bay (CCTB) and the Florida VA. Its goals are to:
 - ◆ Prevent suicides by veterans;
 - ◆ Increase the use of VA services by veterans in Florida; and
 - ◆ Increase the number of veterans who make use of other available community-based services.

Vote YES on HB 179/ SB 326 for Florida's veterans and their families!