



The Mental Health Program for Veterans: Presentation to the House Committee on Defense and Veterans' Affairs

Dr. Courtney Harvey

Manager: Crisis Services and Client Rights Unit,
Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services Division
Department of State Health Services

June 2, 2016

Mental Health Program for Veterans

- House Bill 2392, 83rd Legislative Session, Regular Session, 2013
 - Directed DSHS to develop a Mental Health Program for Veterans that included the following services:
 - peer-to-peer counseling;
 - access to licensed mental health professionals;
 - training for peers;
 - grants to organizations providing services; and
 - jail diversion services.
- The 2016-2017 General Appropriations Act, House Bill 1, 84th Legislative Session, 2015
 - Appropriated \$5 million each fiscal year of the biennium to provide services to veterans through the Mental Health Program for Veterans

Legislation from 84th Legislative Session, 2015

H.B. 19 Relating to a preventive services program and mental health programs for veterans and military families.

S.B. 1304 Relating to the creation of a women veterans mental health initiative within the mental health intervention program for veterans.

S.B. 1305 Relating to the creation of a rural veterans mental health initiative within the mental health intervention program for veterans.



House Bill 19: Mental Health Services for Veterans and Families

Requirement:

- Codified collaboration between DSHS and TVC to train peers in connecting veterans and their families to resources

Implementation:

- DSHS coordinates with TVC and partners with 37 LMHAs to:
 - Provide access to licensed mental health professionals, peer service coordinators, and peers
 - Recruit, train, and guide peer coordinators
- DSHS also coordinates with TVC for Veteran Jail Diversion Services to:
 - Train peers and coordinators to support veterans
 - Provide services to 24 veteran treatment courts; and
 - Deliver continuity of care services to more than 249 veterans incarcerated in prisons and 207 veterans held in county jails (in fiscal year 2015)



Senate Bill 1304: Women Veterans Mental Health Initiative

Requirement

Women's Veteran Initiative added to required programs DSHS provides to veterans

Implementation

- DSHS contracts with TVC to develop and implement initiative
- TVC-led workgroup assessed needs, identified gaps, and recommended outreach efforts
- TVC hired a Women's Veterans Program Coordinator

Senate Bill 1305: Rural Veterans Mental Health Initiative

Requirement

Rural Veteran's Initiative added to required programs DSHS provides to veterans

Implementation

- TVC-led workgroup assessed needs, identified gaps, and recommended outreach tactics, such as:
 - Encourage engagement with trained peers who can help access services such as telehealth and VHA's services in rural areas
- Enhanced outreach efforts in LMHAs serving the 153 counties designated as rural
- TVC technical assistance provided to Peer Service Coordinators



Senate Bill 1305: Rural Veterans Mental Health Initiative

Implementation (continued)

- LMHAs serving rural counties have enhanced their services
 - Nine of the LMHAs serving rural counties implemented Peer Networking Centers where peers gather for training and to access services, meet, and share knowledge about resources.