

HOUSE BILL NO. 5270

November 12, 2025, Introduced by Reps. Conlin, Rogers, Morgan, Xiong, O'Neal, Young, Neeley, Price, B. Carter, McKinney, Witwer, Tate, Koleszar, Liberati, Weiss, Steckloff, Tsernoglou, Paiz, Scott, Glanville, Brixie, Dievendorf, Mentzer, Byrnes, Longjohn, T. Carter, Andrews, Miller, Skaggs, McFall, Wooden and Breen and referred to Committee on Government Operations.

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.

1 (b) "Department" means the department of military and veterans
2 affairs.

3 (c) "Manager" means the manager of the office appointed under
4 section 5.

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

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

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

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

21 (a) Veteran mental health and substance use disorders,
22 including, but not limited to, statistics related to post-traumatic
23 stress disorder, traumatic brain injuries, substance use disorder
24 and addiction, and suicide and suicidal ideation.

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

27 (c) Efforts undertaken and data collected through the
28 interagency agreement with the department of health and human
29 services under section 322 of the Michigan military act, 1967 PA

1 150, MCL 32.722.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

29 Sec. 6. (1) The office shall create and publish a mental

1 health and wellness resource guide. The office shall make the
2 resource guide available on request at no cost to the requestor.

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

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

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

9 (i) Organization or provider name.

10 (ii) Address.

11 (iii) Phone number.

12 (iv) Website, if applicable.

13 (v) Email address, if applicable.

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

15 (c) Mental health signs and symptoms checklist.

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

27 (4) In addition to including the self-assessment and scoring
28 rubric in the resource guide, the office may offer the self-
29 assessment and scoring rubric as a standalone resource if the

1 office considers it necessary. If the office offers the self-
2 assessment and scoring rubric as a standalone resource, it must do
3 so at no charge to the user.

4 (5) The office may list any resource in the resource guide
5 under subsection (2)(b) that the office considers beneficial but
6 may not include only resources connected directly or indirectly to
7 the agency or department.

8 (6) The office must, in the report required under section
9 5(3), specify the number of resource guides it distributes each
10 year and the types of organizations in which the resource guides
11 are distributed based on the following or similar categories:

- 12 (a) Veteran service organizations.
- 13 (b) Local units of government.
- 14 (c) Nonprofit organizations.
- 15 (d) State or federal departments or agencies.
- 16 (e) Department or agency sections.
- 17 (f) For-profit businesses or organizations.
- 18 (g) Other.

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

21 (8) The department shall ensure that members of the Michigan
22 National Guard and any other military servicemembers residing in
23 this state have access to the resource guide at no cost in either
24 or both of the following formats:

- 25 (a) In print in an easily accessible location or on request.
- 26 (b) Electronically on the department's website.

27 (9) As used in this section, "resource guide" means the mental
28 health and wellness resource guide created under subsection (1).

29 Sec. 7. (1) In addition to any other powers and

1 responsibilities granted to the manager under this act or delegated
2 by the director of the agency, the manager shall oversee and
3 supervise both of the following programs:

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

6 (b) In conjunction with the department of health and human
7 services, the interagency agreement on mental health resources and
8 outreach created under section 322 of the Michigan military act,
9 1967 PA 150, MCL 32.722.

10 (2) The manager may, at the manager's discretion and with the
11 approval of the director of the agency, delegate day-to-day
12 administrative or operational functions of the programs listed
13 under subsection (1) to other officials in the agency or department
14 as the manager considers appropriate. However, the manager retains
15 the powers and duties of supervising, data collecting, and
16 reporting, and must give final approval for implementing and
17 changing the programs listed under subsection (1) and those
18 assigned to the manager by the director of the agency.

19 Sec. 8. The manager shall serve as a public point of contact
20 for servicemembers, veterans, and the families of servicemembers
21 and veterans and other stakeholders on mental health, suicide
22 prevention, and related resources and information throughout this
23 state's servicemember and veteran population. The manager shall be
24 a primary point of contact within the agency and department to
25 ensure that programs, resources, and outreach efforts undertaken by
26 the agency or the department related to mental health and suicide
27 prevention are designed and implemented in a manner that ensures
28 those efforts are able to increase awareness and improve outcomes
29 for servicemembers, veterans, and the families of servicemembers

1 and veterans.

2 Enacting section 1. This act takes effect on December 31, 2026
3 and only if a bill is enacted by that date appropriating not less
4 than \$1,000,000.00 for the implementation of this act.

5 Enacting section 2. This act does not take effect unless all
6 of the following bills of the 103rd Legislature are enacted into
7 law:

8 (a) Senate Bill No. ____ (request no. S05231'25) or House Bill
9 No. 5261 (request no. H05231'25).

10 (b) Senate Bill No. ____ (request no. S05232'25) or House Bill
11 No. 5259 (request no. H05232'25).

12 (c) Senate Bill No. ____ (request no. S05233'25) or House Bill
13 No. 5271 (request no. H05233'25).