

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL

No. 654 Session of
2025

INTRODUCED BY LANGERHOLC, MASTRIANO, GEBHARD, BARTOLOTTA,
ROBINSON, KANE, TARTAGLIONE, FONTANA, KEARNEY, VOGEL, COSTA,
CULVER, STEFANO, J. WARD, HUTCHINSON, FLYNN AND MILLER,
APRIL 21, 2025

REFERRED TO VETERANS AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS,
APRIL 21, 2025

AN ACT

1 Amending Title 51 (Military Affairs) of the Pennsylvania
2 Consolidated Statutes, in miscellaneous provisions,
3 establishing the Veterans Mental Health Services Program.

4 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
5 hereby enacts as follows:

6 Section 1. Title 51 of the Pennsylvania Consolidated
7 Statutes is amended by adding a chapter to read:

8 CHAPTER 100

9 VETERANS MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES PROGRAM

10 Sec.

11 10001. Scope of chapter.

12 10002. Definitions.

13 10003. Veterans Mental Health Services Program.

14 § 10001. Scope of chapter.

15 This chapter relates to providing mental health care for
16 veterans who have exhausted their Federal benefits or are in
17 acute crisis.

1 § 10002. Definitions.

2 The following words and phrases when used in this chapter
3 shall have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
4 context clearly indicates otherwise:

5 "Acute crisis." When an individual is in need of immediate
6 mental health care to protect the safety and well-being of the
7 individual or the public.

8 "Department." The Department of Military and Veterans
9 Affairs of the Commonwealth.

10 "Eligible veteran." An individual who served in the United
11 States Armed Forces, including a reserve component or the
12 National Guard, and who meets the requirements under section
13 10003(e) (relating to Veterans Mental Health Services Program).

14 "Health care provider." As defined in 45 CFR 160.103
15 (relating to definitions) as of the effective date of this
16 section.

17 "Participating health care provider." A health care provider
18 who provides mental health services to veterans under the
19 program.

20 "Program." The Veterans Mental Health Services Program
21 established under section 10003(a).

22 "Treatment." As defined in 45 CFR 164.501 (relating to
23 definitions).

24 "Veterans Affairs." The United States Department of Veterans
25 Affairs.

26 § 10003. Veterans Mental Health Services Program.

27 (a) Establishment.--The Veterans Mental Health Services
28 Program is established within the department to provide mental
29 health care to veterans.

30 (b) Reimbursement.--The department shall reimburse

participating health care providers. The following shall apply:

(1) An eligible veteran may receive five reimbursed sessions per year.

(2) The department may grant an eligible veteran additional sessions if determined by the health care provider that the sessions are necessary and the department has:

(i) the resources necessary to reimburse the health care provider; and

(ii) approved the additional sessions before they occur.

(c) Program guidelines.--In consultation with the Department of Human Services, the department shall determine program guidelines for eligible veterans and health care providers.

(d) List of participating providers.--The department shall publish on the department's publicly accessible Internet website a list of participating health care providers.

(e) Eligibility requirements.--In order to be eligible to participate in the program, the following must apply to the veteran:

(1) The veteran was discharged or released from service under conditions other than dishonorable.

(2) Either of the following:

(i) The veteran's benefits related to mental health services provided by Veterans Affairs have been exhausted for the year in which the veteran seeks to participate in the program.

(ii) The veteran is in acute crisis.

(f) Declaration form.--The department shall prescribe and provide participating health care providers with a form on which the eligible veteran shall declare that the eligible veteran has

1 complied with the requirement under subsection (e)(2)(i), if
2 applicable.

3 (g) Treatment requirements.--Prior to treatment, an eligible
4 veteran shall provide the participating health care provider
5 with:

6 (1) A valid identification card that:

7 (i) clearly indicates that the individual is a
8 veteran of the United States Armed Forces; and

9 (ii) includes a photo of the veteran.

10 (2) The completed form required under subsection (f).

11 (h) Report.--

12 (1) No later than December 31 of each year, the
13 department shall issue a report regarding the program,
14 including the number of:

15 (i) eligible veterans participating in the program
16 per county;

17 (ii) health care providers participating in the
18 program per county; and

19 (iii) mental health care sessions provided by the
20 program per county.

21 (2) The report under paragraph (1) shall be submitted to
22 the following:

23 (i) The President pro tempore of the Senate.

24 (ii) The Speaker of the House of Representatives.

25 (iii) The chairperson and minority chairperson of
26 the Appropriations Committee of the Senate.

27 (iv) The chairperson and minority chairperson of the
28 Appropriations Committee of the House of Representatives.

29 (v) The chairperson and minority chairperson of the
30 Health and Human Services Committee of the Senate.

1 (vi) The chairperson and minority chairperson of the
2 Human Services Committee of the House of Representatives.

3 (vii) The chairperson and minority chairperson of
4 the Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee
5 of the Senate.

6 (viii) The chairperson and minority chairperson of
7 the Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee
8 of the House of Representatives.

9 Section 2. This act shall take effect in 120 days.