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SENATE BILL NO. 229

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE

(Proposed by the Senate Committee on Finance and Appropriations  
on January 31, 2024)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Senator Hashmi)

A BILL to direct the State Health Commissioner to establish a work group to examine the feasibility of and make recommendations for the placement and infrastructure of an Advisory Council on Breakthrough Therapies for Veteran Suicide Prevention.

**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

1. § 1. That the State Health Commissioner shall establish a work group to examine the feasibility of and make recommendations for the placement and infrastructure of an Advisory Council on Breakthrough Therapies for Veteran Suicide Prevention (the Council). The work group shall review existing regulations and instances of medication-assisted U.S. Food and Drug Administration breakthrough therapies for veteran suicide prevention in the Commonwealth and surrounding states and develop recommendations related to establishing the Council, particularly in relation to (i) appropriate placement for the Council; (ii) responsibilities of the Council, which may include establishing policies and guidelines for (a) the award of grants for breakthrough therapy treatment through the Veteran Suicide Prevention Program; (b) the necessary education, training, licensing, and credentialing of providers; (c) patient safety and harm reduction; (d) costs, insurance reimbursement, and strategies to safely increase affordable access to care, including the use of group therapy; (e) standards for treatment facilities; (f) relevant federal regulations and guidelines that relevant state agencies may consider adopting; (g) the development of public awareness and education campaigns related to veteran suicides; (h) additional funding needed for subsidized patient access and provider and therapist training; (i) the development of criteria and standards for the award of grants and fellowships; (j) the development and provision of oversight regarding mechanisms for the dissemination of treatment and training data; and (k) the development of provisions to ensure that justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion are considered in the administration of grants and recommendations made to the State Health Commissioner; and (iii) funding necessary to establish and maintain the Council.

The work group shall consist of the State Health Commissioner, the Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Services, the Director of Medical Assistance Services, the Commissioner for Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, and the Director of the Department of Health Professions, or their designees, as well as representatives from veterans' service organizations, hospitals, and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Centers and clinical mental health providers and other relevant stakeholders as determined by the Commissioner. The State Health Commissioner and the Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Services or their designees shall jointly chair the work group. The work group shall report its findings and recommendations related to the placement and infrastructure of the Council by December 1, 2024, to the Governor and the General Assembly.

SENATE SUBSTITUTE

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