

1 VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY — CHAPTER

2 *An Act to amend and reenact §§ 2.2-2004.2 and 32.1-263 of the Code of Virginia, relating to Suicide*
 3 *Prevention Coordinator; deaths by suicide of veterans or military service members; State Registrar of*
 4 *Vital Records; Department of Veterans Services annual report.*

5 [H 529]

6 Approved

7 **Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**8 **1. That §§ 2.2-2004.2 and 32.1-263 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:**9 **§ 2.2-2004.2. Suicide Prevention Coordinator; position created; duties; report.**

10 A. There is created in the Department of ~~Veterans Services~~ the position of Suicide Prevention Coordinator
 11 to support and closely coordinate effective mental health care services for military service members and
 12 veterans and their families.

13 B. The Suicide Prevention Coordinator shall:

14 1. Gather data on mental health challenges commonly experienced by military service members and
 15 veterans and their families that may lead to suicide;

16 2. In coordination with federal, state, and local partners, gather, review, analyze, and disseminate timely
 17 federal, state, and local data on the quantity, common causes, and methods of suicide utilized among military
 18 service members, veterans, and their family members;

19 3. Collaborate with federal, state, and local partners to increase mental health, substance abuse, and
 20 suicide risk screenings and refer military service members and veterans and their family members to the
 21 appropriate behavioral health and medical professionals or services;

22 4. Identify and coordinate new behavioral health and suicide prevention opportunities and funding for
 23 those opportunities and, from such funds as may be appropriated or are otherwise available for this purpose,
 24 administer a grant program to assist local partners in implementing and coordinating suicide prevention
 25 efforts in local communities;

26 5. Provide suicide prevention resources, training, and support to federal, state, and local agencies; ~~and~~

27 6. *Compile and analyze data relating to the suicides of veterans and military service members pursuant to*
 28 *death certificates filed with the State Registrar of Vital Records in accordance with § 32.1-263. Such data*
 29 *shall be included in the annual report submitted in accordance with the provisions of § 2.2-2001;*

30 7. *Collaborate with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services to develop*
 31 *programs and resources related to suicide prevention for veterans and military service members; and*

32 8. Perform other duties as may be required to effectively provide suicide prevention resources, training,
 33 and support to military service members, veterans, and their families.

34 C. The Commissioner shall include a summary of the work of the Suicide Prevention Coordinator in the
 35 annual report to the Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs, the Governor, and the General Assembly as
 36 required pursuant to subdivision 9 of § 2.2-2004.

37 **§ 32.1-263. Filing death certificates; medical certification; investigation by Office of the Chief**
 38 **Medical Examiner.**

39 A. A death certificate, including, if known, the social security number or control number issued by the
 40 Department of Motor Vehicles pursuant to § 46.2-342 of the deceased, shall be filed for each death that
 41 occurs in the Commonwealth. Non-electronically filed death certificates shall be filed with the registrar of
 42 any district in the Commonwealth within three days after such death and prior to final disposition or removal
 43 of the body from the Commonwealth. Electronically filed death certificates shall be filed with the State
 44 Registrar of Vital Records through the Electronic Death Registration System within three days after such
 45 death and prior to final disposition or removal of the body from the Commonwealth. Any death certificate
 46 shall be registered by such registrar if it has been completed and filed in accordance with the following
 47 requirements:

48 1. If the place of death is unknown, but the dead body is found in the Commonwealth, the death shall be
 49 registered in the Commonwealth and the place where the dead body is found shall be shown as the place of
 50 death. If the date of death is unknown, it shall be determined by approximation, taking into consideration all
 51 relevant information, including information provided by the immediate family regarding the date and time
 52 that the deceased was last seen alive, if the individual died in his home; and

53 2. When death occurs in a moving conveyance, in the United States of America and the body is first
 54 removed from the conveyance in the Commonwealth, the death shall be registered in the Commonwealth and
 55 the place where it is first removed shall be considered the place of death. When a death occurs on a moving
 56 conveyance while in international waters or air space or in a foreign country or its air space and the body is

57 first removed from the conveyance in the Commonwealth, the death shall be registered in the Commonwealth
58 but the certificate shall show the actual place of death insofar as can be determined.

59 B. The licensed funeral director, funeral service licensee, office of the state anatomical program, or next
60 of kin as defined in § 54.1-2800 who first assumes custody of a dead body shall complete the certificate of
61 death. He shall obtain personal data of the deceased necessary to complete the certificate of death, including
62 the social security number of the deceased or control number issued to the deceased by the Department of
63 Motor Vehicles pursuant to § 46.2-342, from the best qualified person or source available and obtain the
64 medical certification from the person responsible therefor.

65 If a licensed funeral director, funeral service licensee, or representative of the office of the state
66 anatomical program completes the certificate of death, he shall file the certificate of death with the State
67 Registrar of Vital Records electronically using the Electronic Death Registration System and in accordance
68 with the requirements of subsection A. If a member of the next of kin of the deceased completes the
69 certificate of death, he shall file the certificate of death in accordance with the requirements of subsection A
70 but shall not be required to file the certificate of death electronically.

71 C. The medical certification shall be completed and filed electronically with the State Registrar of Vital
72 Records using the Electronic Death Registration System within 24 hours after death by the physician or
73 autonomous nurse practitioner in charge of the patient's care for the illness or condition that resulted in death
74 except when inquiry or investigation by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner is required by § 32.1-283
75 or 32.1-285.1, or by the physician or autonomous nurse practitioner who pronounces death pursuant to
76 § 54.1-2972. If the death occurred while under the care of a hospice provider, the medical certification shall
77 be completed by the decedent's health care provider and filed electronically with the State Registrar of Vital
78 Records using the Electronic Death Registration System for completion of the death certificate.

79 In the absence of such physician or autonomous nurse practitioner or with his approval, the certificate
80 may be completed and filed by the following: (i) another physician or autonomous nurse practitioner
81 employed or engaged by the same professional practice; (ii) a physician assistant supervised by such
82 physician; (iii) an advanced practice registered nurse who is not an autonomous nurse practitioner practicing
83 in accordance with the provisions of § 54.1-2957; (iv) the chief medical officer or medical director, or his
84 designee, of the institution, hospice, or nursing home in which death occurred; (v) a physician or autonomous
85 nurse practitioner specializing in the delivery of health care to hospitalized or emergency department patients
86 who is employed by or engaged by the facility where the death occurred; (vi) the physician who performed an
87 autopsy upon the decedent; (vii) an individual to whom the physician or autonomous nurse practitioner has
88 delegated authority to complete and file the certificate, if such individual has access to the medical history of
89 the case and death is due to natural causes; or (viii) a physician who is not licensed by the Board of Medicine
90 who was in charge of the patient's care for the illness or condition that resulted in death. A physician
91 described in clause (viii) who completes a certificate in accordance with this subsection shall not be required
92 to register with the Electronic Death Registration System or complete the certificate electronically.

93 As used in this subsection, "autonomous nurse practitioner" has the same meaning as provided in
94 § 54.1-2972.

95 D. When inquiry or investigation by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner is required by § 32.1-283
96 or 32.1-285.1, the Chief Medical Examiner shall cause an investigation of the cause of death to be made and
97 the medical certification portion of the death certificate to be completed and filed within 24 hours after being
98 notified of the death. If the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner refuses jurisdiction, the physician last
99 furnishing medical care to the deceased shall prepare and file the medical certification portion of the death
100 certificate.

101 E. If the death is a natural death and a death certificate is being prepared pursuant to § 54.1-2972 and the
102 physician, autonomous nurse practitioner, or physician assistant is uncertain about the cause of death, he shall
103 use his best medical judgment to certify a reasonable cause of death or contact the health district physician
104 director in the district where the death occurred to obtain guidance in reaching a determination as to a cause
105 of death and document the same.

106 If the cause of death cannot be determined within 24 hours after death, the medical certification shall be
107 completed as provided by regulations of the Board. The attending physician or autonomous nurse
108 practitioner, as defined in § 54.1-2972, or the Chief Medical Examiner, an Assistant Chief Medical Examiner,
109 or a medical examiner appointed pursuant to § 32.1-282 shall give the funeral director or person acting as
110 such notice of the reason for the delay, and final disposition of the body shall not be made until authorized by
111 the attending physician, autonomous nurse practitioner, the Chief Medical Examiner, an Assistant Chief
112 Medical Examiner, or a medical examiner appointed pursuant to § 32.1-282.

113 F. A physician, autonomous nurse practitioner, physician assistant, or individual delegated authority to
114 complete and file a certificate of death by a physician who, in good faith, files a certificate of death or
115 determines the cause of death shall be immune from civil liability, only for such filing and determination of
116 causes of death on such certificate, absent gross negligence or willful misconduct.

117 G. In any case where a death certificate of a veteran or military service member is filed and lists suicide
118 as the manner of death, the State Registrar of Vital Records shall provide such information concerning the

119 *suicide to the Department of Veterans Services.*

ENROLLED

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