

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 897

To authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to make grants to State and local entities to carry out peer-to-peer mental health programs.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 6, 2017

Mr. ZELDIN (for himself, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. SUOZZI, and Miss RICE of New York) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to make grants to State and local entities to carry out peer-to-peer mental health programs.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. P.F.C. JOSEPH P. DWYER PEER SUPPORT PRO-**
4 **GRAM.**

5 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs
6 shall establish a grant program to be known as the
7 “P.F.C. Joseph P. Dwyer Peer Support Program” under
8 which the Secretary shall make grants to eligible entities

1 for the purpose of establishing peer-to-peer mental health
2 programs for veterans.

3 (b) ELIGIBLE ENTITY DEFINED.—In this section,
4 the term “eligible entity” means any of the following enti-
5 ties that submit to the Secretary an application containing
6 such information and assurances as the Secretary may re-
7 quire:

8 (1) A nonprofit organization having historically
9 served veterans mental health needs.

10 (2) A congressionally chartered veteran service
11 organization.

12 (3) A State, local, or tribal veteran service
13 agency, director, or commissioner.

14 (c) AMOUNT OF GRANT.—The recipient of a grant
15 under this section shall receive a grant in an amount that
16 does not exceed \$250,000.

17 (d) USE OF FUNDS.—The recipient of a grant under
18 this section shall use the grant funds to—

19 (1) carry out a program that meets the stand-
20 ards developed under subsection (e);

21 (2) hire veterans to serve as peer specialists to
22 host group and individual meetings with veterans
23 seeking nonclinical support;

24 (3) provide mental health support to veterans
25 24 hours each day, seven days each week; and

1 (4) hire staff to support the program.

2 (e) PROGRAM STANDARDS.—

3 (1) ADVISORY COMMISSION.—The Secretary
4 shall establish an advisory committee for the pur-
5 pose of creating appropriate standards applicable to
6 programs established using grants under this sec-
7 tion.

8 (2) STANDARDS.—The standards developed
9 under paragraph (1) shall include initial and contin-
10 ued training for veteran peer volunteers, administra-
11 tive staffing needs, and best practices for addressing
12 the needs of each veteran served.

13 (f) NONRETENTION OF RECORDS.—The Secretary
14 may not require the recipient of a grant under this section
15 to maintain records on veterans seeking support or to re-
16 port any personally identifying information directly or in-
17 directly to the Secretary about such veterans.

18 (g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
19 authorized to be appropriated \$25,000,000 to carry out
20 this section during the 3-year period beginning on the date
21 of the enactment of this Act.

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