

for emergent suicide care under section 1720J of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), beginning on the date that is 270 days after the date of the enactment of this Act [Dec. 5, 2020]."

§ 1720K. Grants or contracts to provide mental health support to family caregivers of veterans

(a) **AUTHORITY.**—The Secretary may award grants or contracts to carry out, coordinate, improve, or otherwise enhance mental health counseling, treatment, or support to the family caregivers of veterans participating in the family caregiver program.

(b) **APPLICATION.**—(1) To be eligible for a grant or contract under this section, an entity shall submit to the Secretary an application therefor at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may require.

(2) Each application submitted under paragraph (1) shall include the following:

(A) A detailed plan for the use of the grant or contract.

(B) A description of the programs or efforts through which the entity will meet the outcome measures developed by the Secretary under subsection (f).

(C) A description of how the entity will distribute grant or contract amounts equitably among areas with varying levels of urbanization.

(D) A plan for how the grant or contract will be used to meet the unique needs of veterans residing in rural areas, Native American, Native Hawaiian, or Alaska Native veterans, elderly veterans, women veterans, and veterans from other underserved communities.

(c) **DISTRIBUTION.**—The Secretary shall seek to ensure that grants and contracts awarded under this section are equitably distributed among entities located in States with varying levels of urbanization.

(d) **PRIORITY.**—The Secretary shall prioritize awarding grants or contracts under this section that will serve the following areas:

(1) Areas with high rates of veterans enrolled in the family caregiver program.

(2) Areas with high rates of—

(A) suicide among veterans; or

(B) referrals to the Veterans Crisis Line.

(e) **REQUIRED ACTIVITIES.**—Any grant or contract awarded under this section shall be used—

(1) to expand existing programs, activities, and services;

(2) to establish new or additional programs, activities, and services; or

(3) for travel and transportation to facilitate carrying out paragraph (1) or (2).

(f) **OUTCOME MEASURES.**—(1) The Secretary shall develop and provide to each entity that receives a grant or contract under this section written guidance on the following:

(A) Outcome measures.

(B) Policies of the Department.

(2) In developing outcome measures under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall consider the following goals:

(A) Increasing the utilization of mental health services among family caregivers of

veterans participating in the family caregiver program.

(B) Reducing barriers to mental health services among family caregivers of veterans participating in such program.

(g) **TRACKING REQUIREMENTS.**—(1) The Secretary shall establish appropriate tracking requirements with respect to the entities receiving a grant or contract under this section.

(2) Not less frequently than annually, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on such tracking requirements.

(h) **PERFORMANCE REVIEW.**—The Secretary shall—

(1) review the performance of each entity that receives a grant or contract under this section; and

(2) make information regarding such performance publicly available.

(i) **REMEDIATION PLAN.**—(1) In the case of an entity that receives a grant or contract under this section and does not meet the outcome measures developed by the Secretary under subsection (f), the Secretary shall require the entity to submit to the Secretary a remediation plan under which the entity shall describe how and when it plans to meet such outcome measures.

(2) The Secretary may not award a subsequent grant or contract under this section to an entity described in paragraph (1) unless the Secretary approves the remediation plan submitted by the entity under such paragraph.

(j) **MAXIMUM AMOUNT.**—The amount of a grant or contract awarded under this section may not exceed 10 percent of amounts made available for grants or contracts under this section for the fiscal year in which the grant or contract is awarded.

(k) **SUPPLEMENT, NOT SUPPLANT.**—Any grant or contract awarded under this section shall be used to supplement and not supplant funding that is otherwise available through the Department to provide mental health support among family caregivers of veterans participating in the family caregiver program.

(l) **OUTREACH TO FAMILY CAREGIVERS.**—The Secretary shall include, in the outreach materials regularly provided to a family caregiver who participates in the family caregiver program, notice of mental health support provided by recipients of grants or contracts under this section that are located in the relevant Veterans Integrated Service Network.

(m) **FUNDING.**—(1) Amounts for the activities of the Department under this section shall be budgeted and appropriated through a separate appropriation account.

(2) In the budget justification materials submitted to Congress in support of the budget of the Department for any fiscal year (as submitted with the budget of the President under section 1105(a) of title 31), the Secretary shall include a separate statement of the amount requested to be appropriated for that fiscal year for the account specified in paragraph (1).

(n) **AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary, for each of fiscal years 2025 and 2026, \$10,000,000 to carry out this section.

(o) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) The terms “caregiver” and “family caregiver” have the meanings given those terms in section 1720G of this title.

(2) The term “family caregiver program” means the program of comprehensive assistance for family caregivers under section 1720G of this title.

(3) The term “Veterans Crisis Line” means the toll-free hotline for veterans established under section 1720F of this title.

(Added Pub. L. 118–210, title I, § 122, Jan. 2, 2025, 138 Stat. 2724.)

§ 1720L. Home- and community-based services: programs

(a) IN GENERAL.—In furnishing noninstitutional alternatives to nursing home care pursuant to the authority of section 1720C of this title (or any other authority under this chapter or other provision of law administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs), the Secretary shall carry out each of the programs specified in this section in accordance with such relevant authorities except as otherwise provided in this section.

(b) VETERAN-DIRECTED CARE PROGRAM.—(1) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in collaboration with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, shall carry out a program to be known as the “Veteran-Directed Care program”. Under such program, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may enter into agreements with the providers described in paragraph (2) to provide to eligible veterans funds, to the extent practicable, to obtain such in-home care services and related items that support clinical need and improve quality of life, as may be determined appropriate by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and selected by the veteran, including through the veteran hiring individuals to provide such services and items or directly purchasing such services and items.

(2) The providers described in this paragraph are the following:

(A) An Aging and Disability Resource Center, an area agency on aging, or a State agency.

(B) A center for independent living.

(C) An Indian tribe or tribal organization receiving assistance under title VI of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3057 et seq.).

(D) Any other entity that the Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, determines appropriate.

(3) In carrying out the Veteran-Directed Care program, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall—

(A) administer such program through each medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs;

(B) seek to ensure the availability of such program in American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands of the United States, and any other territory or possession of the United States, to the extent practicable; and

(C) seek to ensure the availability of such program for eligible veterans who are Native

American veterans receiving care and services furnished by the Indian Health Service, a tribal health program, an Urban Indian organization, or (in the case of a Native Hawaiian veteran) a Native Hawaiian health care system, to the extent practicable.

(4) If a veteran participating in the Veteran-Directed Care program is hospitalized, the veteran may continue to use funds under the program during a period of hospitalization in the same manner that the veteran would be authorized to use such funds under the program if the veteran were not hospitalized.

(c) HOMEMAKER AND HOME HEALTH AIDE PROGRAM.—(1) The Secretary shall carry out a program to be known as the “Homemaker and Home Health Aide program” under which the Secretary may enter into agreements with home health agencies to provide to eligible veterans such home health aide services as may be determined appropriate by the Secretary.

(2) In carrying out the Homemaker and Home Health Aide program, the Secretary shall—

(A) administer such program in the locations specified in subparagraph (A) of subsection (b)(3);

(B) seek to ensure the availability of such program in the locations specified in subparagraph (B) of subsection (b)(3); and

(C) seek to ensure the availability of such program for the veteran populations specified in subparagraph (C) of subsection (b)(3).

(d) HOME-BASED PRIMARY CARE PROGRAM.—The Secretary shall carry out a program to be known as the “Home-Based Primary Care program” under which the Secretary may furnish to eligible veterans in-home health care, the provision of which is overseen by a provider of the Department.

(e) PURCHASED SKILLED HOME CARE PROGRAM.—The Secretary shall carry out a program to be known as the “Purchased Skilled Home Care program” under which the Secretary may furnish to eligible veterans such in-home care services as may be determined appropriate and selected by the Secretary for the veteran.

(f) CAREGIVER SUPPORT.—(1) With respect to a resident eligible caregiver of a veteran participating in a program under this section, the Secretary shall—

(A) if the veteran meets the requirements of a covered veteran under section 1720G(b) of this title, provide to such caregiver the option of enrolling in the program of general caregiver support services under such section;

(B) provide to such caregiver covered respite care of not less than 30 days annually; and

(C) conduct on an annual basis (and, to the extent practicable, in connection with in-person services provided under the program in which the veteran is participating), a wellness contact of such caregiver.

(2) Covered respite care provided to a resident eligible caregiver of a veteran under paragraph (1) may exceed 30 days annually if such extension is requested by the resident eligible caregiver or veteran and determined medically appropriate by the Secretary.

(g) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the authority