

House Bill 414 (AS PASSED HOUSE AND SENATE)

By: Representatives Blackmon of the 146th, Hatchett of the 155th, Williams of the 168th,
Oliver of the 82nd, and Mughal of the 105th

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Article 1 of Chapter 4 of Title 38 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,
2 relating to the Department of Veterans Service, so as to provide for a grant program to aid
3 in the provision of behavioral health services to service members, veterans, and their
4 families; to provide for definitions; to provide for program qualification requirements; to
5 provide for rules and regulations; to provide for related matters; to provide for an effective
6 date; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

7 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

8 **SECTION 1.**

9 Article 1 of Chapter 4 of Title 38 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the
10 Department of Veterans Service, is amended by adding a new Code section to read as
11 follows:

12 "38-4-15.

13 (a) As used in this Code section, the term:

14 (1) 'Addictive disease' shall have the same meaning as set forth in Code Section 37-1-1.

15 (2) 'Behavioral health services' means services which are designed to prevent or
16 ameliorate the effects of mental illness or addictive disease.

17 (3) 'Eligible person' means a service member, veteran, or a family member of such
18 service member or veteran.

19 (4) 'Family member' means an individual with a close familial relationship, including,
20 but not limited to, a spouse, parent, child, stepchild, sibling, or grandparent.

21 (5) 'Mental illness' shall have the same meaning as set forth in Code Section 37-1-1.

22 (6) 'Program' means the Veterans Mental Health Services Program created pursuant to
23 subsection (b) of this Code section.

24 (7) 'Service member' means an active duty member of the regular or reserve component
25 of the United States armed forces, the United States Coast Guard, the Georgia National
26 Guard, or the Georgia Air National Guard on ordered federal duty for a period of 90 days
27 or longer.

28 (8) 'Veteran' means a person who is a former member of the United States armed forces,
29 the United States Coast Guard, the Georgia National Guard, or the Georgia Air National
30 Guard, regardless of their role or discharge status.

31 (b) The Department of Veterans Service shall create and administer a grant program, to
32 be known as the Veterans Mental Health Services Program, to aid in the provision of
33 behavioral health services through nonprofit community behavioral health programs to
34 eligible persons.

35 (c) Subject to the availability of funding, the Department of Veterans Service shall award
36 competitive matching grants to establish and expand nonprofit community behavioral
37 health programs that:

38 (1) Provide behavioral health services to eligible persons in the community;

39 (2) Utilize evidence based practices;

40 (3) Integrate military cultural competency training for program staff members; and

41 (4) Connect eligible persons to appropriate community based behavioral health services
42 in a timely manner on discharge from the nonprofit community behavioral health
43 program.

44 (d) The Department of Veterans Service, in implementing the Veterans Mental Health
45 Services Program, shall develop grant program qualification requirements for applicants,
46 including, but not limited to, the provision:

47 (1) That applicants must provide behavioral health services to service members, veterans,
48 and their families;

49 (2) Of priority status for program eligibility for locations within 50 miles of a military
50 base; and

51 (3) Of priority status for applicants seeking grants for operating costs attached to a
52 qualifying project for which capital investments have already been made.

53 (e) If taxpayer funded grants total fifty percent of non profits total funding with any
54 combination of federal, state, or local grants non profit shall be subject to the provisions
55 of Article 4 of Chapter 18 of Title 50 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated.

56 (f) The Department of Veterans Service shall promulgate such other rules and regulations
57 as necessary to implement this Code section."

58 **SECTION 2.**

59 This Act shall become effective upon its approval by the Governor or upon its becoming law
60 without such approval.

61 **SECTION 3.**

62 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.