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SJR-4 Veteran health care. (2023-2024)

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Senate Joint Resolution No. 4

CHAPTER 117

Relative to Veterans health care.

[Filed with Secretary of State July 06, 2023.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SJR 4, Ochoa Bogh. Veteran health care.

This measure urges the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to locate satellite Veterans Health Administration medical clinics on or near state veterans home campuses and further urges the United States Congress to provide federal funding for the operation of such satellite clinics.

Fiscal Committee: no

WHEREAS, The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) within the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is the largest integrated health care system in the United States, providing care at 1,298 health care facilities, including 171 VA medical centers and 1,113 outpatient sites of care of varying complexity to over 9,000,000 veterans enrolled in the VA health care program; and

WHEREAS, With nearly 1,600,000 veterans living in California, it is the policy of the state to ensure that its veterans and their families get the state and federal benefits and services they have earned and deserve as a result of selfless and honorable military service; and

WHEREAS, The Veterans Homes of California within the Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) offer long-term care to more than 2,300 aged and disabled veterans as well as their eligible spouses and domestic partners at eight facilities across the state, with services ranging from independent living programs with minimal support to full-time skilled nursing care for veterans with significant clinical needs; and

WHEREAS, In 2019, CalVet conducted a full-scale reappraisal of every veterans home, including their levels of care, regional demand, hiring capabilities, infrastructure, underutilized properties, and other characteristics necessary for effective strategic planning, and issued a follow-up report specifically on the Barstow Veterans Home in 2021; and

WHEREAS, CalVet, when determining the best continued use of the veterans homes, currently conducts an assessment on veteran need in the communities surrounding each veterans home; and

WHEREAS, CalVet also assesses the proximity of VA medical facilities that provide comprehensive specialty services for veterans home residents, and whether these VA medical facilities are located no more than 60 minutes away, and ideally less than 30 minutes away; and

WHEREAS, Currently the state's two oldest Veterans Homes in Yountville and Barstow are located 45 minutes and 93 minutes respectively from a VA medical center; and

WHEREAS, It is California law for CalVet, when reviewing the best continued use of every state veterans home, to assess the need for veterans living at or near a veterans home to access care at a VA medical facility, and the potential for the VHA to place satellite medical clinics on state veterans home campuses and within a 30-minute drive of a state veterans home campus, to serve both residents of the veteran homes and nonresident veterans in the communities where state veterans homes are located; and

WHEREAS, It is also California law that CalVet meet and confer with officials of the VA on the possibility of locating satellite clinics on state veterans home campuses or within a 30-minute drive of a state veteran home campus; and

WHEREAS, It is an objective of the VA to enhance customer satisfaction and experience by providing high-quality care and ease of access to care; and

WHEREAS, Increased access to and use of a broad spectrum of services would encourage and support lifelong whole health and wellness; and

WHEREAS, Building an integrated delivery network will provide greater choice for care not only for all veterans across the VA system but especially to veterans residing on state veterans home campuses and for those veterans living in the communities surrounding veterans home campuses; and

WHEREAS, California aims to tailor care to serve every veteran within California, ensuring equity for those who are underserved; and

WHEREAS, It is an obligation of all Americans in thanking our veterans for their commitment to our country, to ensure that there be proper access to critical health and mental health services; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and the Assembly of the State of California, jointly, That the Legislature urges the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to locate satellite VHA medical clinics on California's veterans home campuses or within a 30-minute drive of a California veterans home campus; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature urges the Congress of the United States to provide funding for the ongoing operation of satellite VHA medical clinics located on or near California veterans home campuses; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United States, the Secretary of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, the Undersecretary of the VHA within the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, the Majority Leader of the United States Senate, and to each Senator and Representative from California in the Congress of the United States.