

Law Review 13018

January 2013

NDAA 2013 Authorizes Pilot Program for Mental Health Services for the National Guard and Reserve

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9.0--Miscellaneous

On January 2, 2013, President Obama signed into law the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013 (NDAA 2013). Section 706 of this new law authorizes the Department of Defense to create and implement a pilot program on mental health services for members of the National Guard and Reserve and their families. Here is section 706 in its entirety:

SEC. 706. PILOT PROGRAM ON ENHANCEMENTS OF DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE EFFORTS ON MENTAL HEALTH IN THE NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVES THROUGH COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS.

(a) PROGRAM AUTHORITY.—The Secretary of Defense may carry out a pilot program to enhance the efforts of the Department of Defense in research, treatment, education, and outreach on mental health and substance use disorders and traumatic brain injury in members of the National Guard and Reserves, their family members, and their caregivers through community partners.

(b) AGREEMENTS WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERS.—In carrying out the pilot program authorized by subsection (a), the Secretary may enter into partnership agreements with community partners described in subsection (c) using a competitive and merit-based award process.

(c) COMMUNITY PARTNER DESCRIBED.—A community partner described in this subsection is a private non-profit organization or institution that meets such qualifications as the Secretary shall establish for purposes of the pilot program and engages in one or more of the following:

(1) Research on the causes, development, and innovative treatment of mental health and substance use disorders and traumatic brain injury in members of the National Guard and Reserves, their family members, and their caregivers.

(2) Identifying and disseminating evidence-based treatments of mental health and substance use disorders and traumatic brain injury described in paragraph (1).

(3) Outreach and education to such members, their families and caregivers, and the public about mental health and substance use disorders and traumatic brain injury described in paragraph (1).

(d) DURATION.—The duration of the pilot program may not exceed three years.

(e) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days before the completion of the pilot program, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the congressional defense committees a report on the results of the pilot program, including the number of members of the National Guard and Reserves provided treatment or services by community partners, and a description and assessment of the effectiveness and achievements of the pilot program with respect to research, treatment, education, and outreach on mental health and substance use disorders and traumatic brain injury.