

HB 1313 -- ALTERNATIVE TREATMENT OPTIONS FOR VETERANS

SPONSOR: Sauls

This bill establishes the "Veterans Traumatic Brain Injury Treatment Act". This bill allows the Veterans Commission to contract with public or private institutions of higher education in this state, or public or private clinics or hospitals, to furnish alternative treatment options for veterans who have been certified by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, any branch of the United States Armed Forces, or any state-licensed physician as having a traumatic brain injury or posttraumatic stress disorder. The institution of higher education will manage, monitor, and ensure the compliance of contracted providers of any of the following alternative treatment options:

- (1) Accelerated resolution therapy;
- (2) Equine therapy;
- (3) Hyperbaric oxygen therapy, which will be provided at a registered and licensed hyperbaric oxygen facility;
- (4) Music therapy; or
- (5) Service animal training therapy.

A veteran qualifies to receive alternative treatment under this bill if he or she:

- (1) Has been diagnosed, by a health care practitioner, with service-connected posttraumatic stress disorder or a service-connected traumatic brain injury; and
- (2) Voluntarily agrees to such alternative treatment.

The provision of alternative treatment will be under the direction and supervision of an individual licensed under this state to perform such alternative treatment.

The supervising licensed provider must agree to cooperate with the Veterans Commission to provide data sufficient to assess the efficacy of alternative treatment modalities. Acceptable data may include, but will not be limited to, institutional review board clinical trial data, pretreatment and posttreatment MRI brain scans, cognitive testing such as the RightEye testing approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration, Automated Neuropsychological Assessment Metrics (ANAM) approved by the United States Department of Defense, and CNS Vital Signs (CNSVS) metrics.

This bill specifies that a health care provider or health care facility shall make hyperbaric oxygen therapy available to a military veteran who meets the requirements of this bill and who has requested such therapy. Such health care provider or health care facility may provide the hyperbaric oxygen therapy without receiving compensation; require a military veteran to pay for the cost of the hyperbaric oxygen therapy and any associated costs, at a rate that will not exceed the maximum rate allowed by Medicare; or allow a military veteran to utilize alternative sources of funding to cover the cost of the hyperbaric oxygen therapy and any associated costs, as provided in the bill.

This bill specifies that a military veteran will be entitled to receive hyperbaric oxygen therapy if the military veteran:

- (1) Has received a diagnosis of PTSD or TBI;
- (2) Has received an official recommendation for hyperbaric oxygen therapy from the health care provider that treats the eligible patient; and
- (3) Resides in this state.

A licensing board will not revoke, suspend, or fail to renew the license of a health care provider or take any other punitive action against a health care provider, based on a recommendation or counseling by the health care provider relating to access to or treatment with a hyperbaric oxygen chamber for a military veteran.

No person acting on behalf of this state will block or attempt to block a military veteran from receiving access to hyperbaric oxygen treatment.

This bill is similar to HB 2472 2022 and HB 1213 (2021).