

<b>LFC Requester:</b>	<b>Kelly Klundt</b>
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**AGENCY BILL ANALYSIS  
2024 REGULAR SESSION**

**WITHIN 24 HOURS OF BILL POSTING, UPLOAD ANALYSIS TO:**

**Analysis.nmlegis.gov**

*{Analysis must be uploaded as a PDF}*

**SECTION I: GENERAL INFORMATION**

*{Indicate if analysis is on an original bill, amendment, substitute or a correction of a previous bill}*

*Check all that apply:*

**Original**     **Amendment**      
**Correction**     **Substitute**   

**Date** 01/25/24  
**Bill No:** HB 240

**Sponsor:** H. Vincent / A. Martinez / L. Terrazas / J. Chatfield / J. Jones  
**Short Title:** Veteran PTSD Program

**Agency Name and Code** Department of Veterans' Services 67000  
**Number:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Person Writing** D. Mourning Brown / D. Lucero  
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**SECTION II: FISCAL IMPACT**

**APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)**

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY24	FY25		
N/A	2,000.0	Nonrecurring	GF

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

**REVENUE (dollars in thousands)**

Estimated Revenue			Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY24	FY25	FY26		
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

**ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)**

	<b>FY24</b>	<b>FY25</b>	<b>FY26</b>	<b>3 Year Total Cost</b>	<b>Recurring or Nonrecurring</b>	<b>Fund Affected</b>
<b>Total</b>	N/A	85.0	N/A	N/A	Nonrecurring	GF

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Duplicates/Conflicts with/Companion to/Relates to:  
Duplicates/Relates to Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act

**SECTION III: NARRATIVE**

**BILL SUMMARY**

Synopsis:

An appropriation to the to the Veterans’ Services Department for use in FY2025 to contract with a veteran, police, and first responder posttraumatic stress disorder therapy program.

**FISCAL IMPLICATIONS** Under current statute the NM Dept of Veterans’ Services, we are unable to provide services to anyone that is not a Veteran, their surviving spouses, children, and Gold Star Parents for services necessary for the procurement of eligible benefits. Based on language clarification, one (1) FTE would be required for contract administration to multiple vendors statewide to accomplish execution of the attached appropriation.

Note: major assumptions underlying fiscal impact should be documented.

Note: if additional operating budget impact is estimated, assumptions and calculations should be reported in this section.

**SIGNIFICANT ISSUES**

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) operates the National Center for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). PTSD is a mental health problem and can only develop after going through or seeing a life-threatening event. According to the VA, the number of Veterans experiencing PTSD varies by service era. Nearly 30% of Vietnam-era Veterans have had PTSD in their lifetime; 12% of Gulf War Veterans have had PTSD within a given year; and between up to 20% of Operation Iraqi Freedom/Enduring Freedom Veterans have had PTSD within a given year. Agency is requesting clarification of state language in the Bill describing “to contract with a veteran, police and first responder posttraumatic stress disorder therapy program.”

**PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS**

The New Mexico Department of Veterans’ Services (NMDVS) provides services for Veterans but not specifically for first responders or police personnel unless they are also veterans. An umbrella of services could perhaps incorporate police and first responders with PTSD to be referred for services under this appropriation.

**ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

The NMDVS, Healthcare Coordination Division is tasked with advising and coordinating health care-related issues for Service Members, Veterans and their Families (SMVF.) The Division does not provide direct health care services or treatment but would be able to contract for PTSD treatment services and/or provide resources and referrals for PTSD therapy. With the

implementation of and increased public awareness of the 988 New Mexico Crisis and Access Line, reported cases of PTSD are on the rise, especially in rural states such as New Mexico. It must be noted that PTSD and other emotional, mental or substance misuse challenges can lead to suicide. Currently, NMDVS supports SMVF who report PTSD, Military Sexual Trauma (MST) and suicide ideation. NMDVS is the state lead for the Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide among SMVF. With the implementation of a public relations campaign and contractual services for suicide prevention, NMDVS is poised for increased support for Veterans with PTSD and other behavioral health challenges. NMDVS would require additional personnel, such as social workers, in order to coordinate service provision for Veterans. Collaboration with city and county behavioral health centers, Veteran service organizations, the Vet Centers, and private behavioral health agencies is essential. Certified Peer Support Workers (CPSW) and Community Support Workers are employed by most behavioral health centers to respond to Veterans and community members facing PTSD and other challenges, which supports NMDVS contracting for services.

### **CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP**

The VA Medical Center (VAMC) provides behavioral health services for veterans suffering from PTSD. The Vet Centers throughout the state also provide therapy and counseling for veterans. All veterans can receive free behavioral health treatment from any hospital in New Mexico. First responders and the police have access to behavioral health resources such as crisis intervention, suicide prevention and PTSD therapy, through their medical/health insurance benefits, their unions, or employee assistance programs.

### **TECHNICAL ISSUES**

### **OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES**

### **ALTERNATIVES**

Collaboration with other state agencies such as the Department of Health and the Human Services Department (Health Authority Department) should be considered for the provision of PTSD therapy and treatment for police and first responders. Many counties in New Mexico have mental health centers that can potentially provide PTSD therapy and treatment for police and first responders.

### **WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL**

As current levels of funding for services aren't threatened, would be *status quo* in this case.

### **AMENDMENTS**