

<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** 02/01/24

**Bill No:** HB298

<b>Sponsor:</b> <u>Eliseo L. Alcon / Harry Garcia</u>	<b>Agency Name and Code</b> Department of Veterans' Services
<b>Short Title:</b> <u>Services Members and Veterans Suicide Prevention Act</u>	<b>Number:</b> <u>67000</u>
	<b>Person Writing</b> <u>D. Lucero / D. MourningBrown</u>
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**SECTION II: FISCAL IMPACT**

**APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)**

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY24	FY25		
	100.0	Recurring	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>		170.0	170.0	510.0	recurring	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: **HB 298** Enacts the Service Members and Veterans Suicide Prevention Act within the New Mexico Veterans’ Services Department (NMDVS) to raise awareness regarding suicide within the population of Service Members, Veterans, and Military Family Members to increase access to suicide prevention resources.

**FISCAL IMPLICATIONS – HB 298** will appropriate \$100,000 from the general fund to the NMDVS for expenditures in fiscal 2025 to carry out the provision of the Service Member and Veterans Suicide Prevention Act. NMDVS will need to add additional FTEs to the Healthcare division to develop and manage the program and to provide reporting and oversight to the Military and Veterans Affairs Committee. The Healthcare Division’s new FTE should include one (1) FTE data analyst and one (1) FTE program coordinator to implement the Services Member and Veterans Suicide Prevention Act.

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 -**

Suicide among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families (SMVF) is a public health and national security crisis. After accounting for age differences, the Veteran suicide rate in New Mexico (46.9 per 100,000) was significantly higher than the national Veteran suicide rate (33.9 per 100,000.)

**PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS –**

NMDVS Healthcare Division currently serves as the state lead for the Governor’s Challenge to Prevent Suicide among SMVF. In its third year, the Governor’s Challenge has completed a strategic plan, identified priorities, and is implementing a public awareness campaign, with support from the Department of Health (DOH). The Governor’s Challenge is a partnership between the DOH, Human Services Department (Health Care Authority,) Veteran service organizations, county behavioral health centers, nonprofit organizations, the VA, and the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA.)

**ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS –**

NMDVS provides contractual services for suicide prevention and treatment for Veterans and service members but does not currently have a formal program or ongoing financial support. NMDVS would require additional personnel to establish, develop, and implement the Service Members and Veterans Suicide Prevention Act. A suicide prevention coordinator and a data

analyst will be required to implement the program and provide required reports.

**CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP** – None noted by reviewer.

**TECHNICAL ISSUES** - None noted by reviewer.

**OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES -**

Data to monitor suicide risk and outcomes for service members, veterans, and their family members is necessary in New Mexico among relevant agencies. Current data issued by the VA are not inclusive of local or state demographics. Data collection and analysis by NMDVS and DOH partners will advance interagency research coordination, ensure integration of data, and encourage adoption of rigorous program evaluation across suicide prevention programs in the state. These efforts will improve our understanding of the factors that lead to suicide in the military and Veteran community, promote early identification of risk, and help ensure the effectiveness of suicide prevention programs. NMDVS is currently a lead partner with DOH in the development and implementation of the Suicide Mortality Review Committee (SMRC) for Veterans. SMRC's are being implemented across the nation as part of the Governor's Challenge and in conjunction with SAMHSA. SMRCs are an important piece of the research, program evaluation and integration of data on suicide prevention and awareness.

**ALTERNATIVES** - None noted by reviewer.

**WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL** –The lack of suicide awareness and prevention programs is a detriment to reducing or eliminating service members, veterans, and family members suicides.

**AMENDMENTS - NA**