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HOUSE BILL 73

52ND LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2016

INTRODUCED BY

Dianne Miller Hamilton

AN ACT

RELATING TO VETERANS; CONTINUING A PILOT PROJECT TO TREAT
VETERANS WITH POSTTRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER USING VIRTUAL
REALITY TREATMENT DEVICES; PROVIDING FOR THERAPISTS' TRAINING;
PROVIDING FOR VIRTUAL REALITY THERAPY CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT
FOR THE MASTER'S OF SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM AT WESTERN NEW MEXICO
UNIVERSITY; MAKING AN APPROPRIATION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

SECTION 1. ~~[NEW MATERIAL]~~ VETERANS VIRTUAL REALITY
TREATMENT PILOT PROJECT--CONTINUED--ADMINISTRATION--TRAINING--
CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT--FUND CREATED.--

A. The "veterans virtual reality treatment pilot
project", created in fiscal year 2014 with funding through the
General Appropriation Act of 2013, is continued through fiscal
year 2018 to determine the efficacy of virtual reality

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1 treatment for veterans who suffer from posttraumatic stress
2 disorder. The purpose of the pilot project is to:

3 (1) demonstrate that virtual reality therapy
4 is a cost-effective and therapeutically effective strategy to
5 help reduce anxiety and depression and other symptoms of
6 posttraumatic stress disorder;

7 (2) demonstrate that virtual reality therapy
8 will decrease long-term costs due to chronic care needs,
9 reduced productivity and suicide among veterans with
10 posttraumatic stress disorder;

11 (3) develop and implement a related curriculum
12 in the master's of social work program at western New Mexico
13 university to train social workers in the therapeutic use of
14 virtual reality therapy;

15 (4) train graduate social workers and other
16 therapists to provide virtual reality therapy; and

17 (5) provide therapeutic services to rural
18 veterans closer to their homes through the use of mobile
19 virtual reality therapy devices.

20 B. The pilot project shall be administered by
21 western New Mexico university. The university shall establish
22 reporting and evaluation requirements for the pilot project and
23 shall provide interim and final reports to the governor and to
24 the legislature through the legislative health and human
25 services committee. A copy of the reports shall be provided to

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1 the legislative council service library.

2 C. The university shall establish a "veterans
3 virtual reality treatment fund" into which all appropriations,
4 gifts, grants and donations for the pilot project and income
5 from investment of the fund shall be deposited. The university
6 shall seek public and private gifts, grants and donations for
7 the pilot project. The university shall administer the fund,
8 and money in the fund is appropriated to the university to
9 carry out the purposes of the veterans virtual reality
10 treatment pilot project. Money shall be expended in accordance
11 with the terms of any gifts, grants and donations to the pilot
12 project. Unless otherwise specified by the terms of a grant or
13 donation, money in the fund at the end of the pilot project
14 shall revert to the general fund.

15 SECTION 2. APPROPRIATION.--Two hundred thousand dollars
16 (\$200,000) is appropriated from the general fund to the board
17 of regents of western New Mexico university for expenditure in
18 fiscal years 2017 and 2018 to continue the veterans virtual
19 reality treatment pilot project. Any unexpended or
20 unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2018
21 shall revert to the general fund.