



# NC Department of Military And Veterans Affairs

Presentation to Oversight Committee on General Government  
Pursuant to Session Law 2017- 29  
SB 62

February 6, 2018

# BRIEF BACKGROUND

- North Carolina has six major military bases - Fort Bragg, Seymour Johnson AFB, MCB Camp Lejeune, MCAS Cherry Point, MCAS New River, and Elizabeth City Coast Guard Base as well as the NC National Guard and Reserves.
- The state has one of the largest veteran populations in the nation, which consist of over 700,000 veterans. North Carolina's military and veteran communities contribute more than \$66 billion to the state's economy.



# PURPOSE OF STUDY

Senate Bill 62 of S.L. 2017-29 directed the North Carolina Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA) to study *potential* methods for documenting, collecting, and analyzing the outcomes for individual military veterans and their families of various programs in NC. The legislation further directed DMVA to report its findings and recommendations to the chairs of the Senate and House of Representatives Appropriations Subcommittees.



# APPROACH

- In response to **Senate Bill 62 of S.L. 2017-29**, DMVA examined modern and widely agreed upon methods of documenting, collecting, and analyzing the outcomes and effectiveness of programs and services. Based upon information and expertise provided by subject matter experts, DMVA determined that a mixed-method approach should be utilized to address this mandate.



# KEY FINDINGS

- There are numerous methods available to evaluate the outcomes of programs and services. The correct evaluation methods depends upon the goals and objectives that are to be achieved.
- The state needs a comprehensive and strategic plan to address challenges faced by veterans and their families. That plan should include programs, services and other resources that are veteran centered.
- Included in that plan should be a monitoring and evaluation component customized to the program and or service. The measurement of the effectiveness of a program and or service needs to be included throughout the program and should not just occur in isolation or at the end of the program.
- A thorough and comprehensive inventory of all programs, services and other benefits available for veterans and their family members should be completed as a key step to accurately address the effectiveness of programs and services.



# OUTCOME EVALUATIONS

An outcomes based evaluation will measure the long term effects of programs and services on the target population.

- Some of the questions that may be addressed through the evaluation process include:
- Were N.C. military veterans and their family members who received services from targeted programs more likely to demonstrate statistically significant improvements in core functioning areas (health, social supports, economic) than those who did not receive services?
- Did the select programs and services result in measurable changes in knowledge, attitudes, and skills among the members of the target population?
- Did the select programs have unintended (beneficial or adverse) effects on the target populations? For example, were the services provided to a substance addicted veteran effective in the treatment?

Outcomes evaluation methods would include the following:

- Survey questionnaires assessing behaviors, knowledge, skills at baseline and at multiple points throughout the process;
- Reports from service providers including health, housing, economic and other supports;
- Data collected from service providers on outputs including amount of services provided, (number of sessions, treatments, etc.) Number of participants who completed the program, referrals, length of time, and other points of contact.



# IMPACT EVALUATION

An impact study will examine the short-term change on the target population. It would measure the degree to which the programs serving N.C. military veterans and families meet their specified and ultimate goals, and could provide evidence for future funding and policy decisions. This type of study will include data collection methods that allow for the analysis of input, and process type data including costs and financial audits, description of programs and services, descriptive data on participants and staff as well as program activities inputs.

Data collection methodologies for input evaluation will include:

- Participant satisfaction and experience surveys
- Direct observation
- Focus groups; program audits (records, data, etc.)
- Semi-structured and structured interviews with participants and service providers.



# RECOMMENDATIONS

- The department realizes that there are various methods available to document, collect and analyze program outcomes. The following recommendation is just one suggestion. Additionally, we have included other recommendations for the committee to consider as the state seeks to fulfil its commitment to military veterans and their families in N.C.
- Based on our analysis we recommend a mixed-methods approach to evaluate the outcomes of current veteran programs and services. A mixed-methods approach would ensure that the strengths and weaknesses of each approach are maximized. A mixed-methods study would include both an outcomes and impact evaluation utilizing qualitative (focus groups, case studies, and interviews) and quantitative (longitudinal and cross-sectional survey) methods that would be conducted concurrently to assess the degree to which programs and services delivered to military veterans and families are having positive outcomes and effects across service needs. This method would be utilized to study areas such as the veteran's health conditions (mental and physical), social supports such as housing, and economic security including employment and other aid.



# ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- *(1) Appropriate resources for DMVA to develop a comprehensive strategic plan for veterans and their dependents.*

Currently a comprehensive strategic plan to address challenges faced by veterans and their families doesn't exist. The legislature could provide full funding and sufficient resources for DMVA to develop and execute a comprehensive strategic plan or work in partnership with other allies/stakeholders to develop this plan for veterans and their families.

- *(2) Create a comprehensive and current inventory of veterans' programs in N.C.*

To effectively assess the needs of N.C. veterans and their families, the state should determine what programs and services are currently available and where additional supports are needed. general assembly staff or an independent research organization could create a comprehensive inventory of all federal, state and local programs including non-profits available to veterans and their families in N.C.



# ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

*(3) Create an interim legislative committee or direct an existing one to study solutions to increase access to programs and services to improve the quality of life for veterans and their families.*

- DMVA recommends establishing an interim legislative study committee on veterans. The committee would create a plan of action to ensure the opportunity for a quality life for veterans and their families. The plan would address any barriers that currently exist but also opportunities for replication and or expansion of programs, services, resources, etc. The committee would study these and other issues and make appropriate policy recommendations.
- The committee would be comprised of legislators, military personnel and veterans, family members, subject matter experts and other external partners.
- The body would report its findings at the start of the 2020 legislative session.



# ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- DMVA welcomes the opportunity to collaborate/consult on the use of the information requested and to work with the chairs of the subcommittee to advance a comprehensive and strategic approach to ensuring that military veterans and their family members are afforded every opportunity to live a productive and prosperous life in North Carolina.



# QUESTIONS?



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AND VETERANS AFFAIRS**