

ONE HUNDRED NINTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION - 2025
COMMITTEE STATEMENT
LB414

Hearing Date: Thursday March 06, 2025
Committee On: Government, Military and Veterans Affairs
Introducer: Dungan
One Liner: Establish a suicide mortality review team for the Department of Veterans' Affairs

Roll Call Vote - Final Committee Action:
Advanced to General File with amendment(s)

Vote Results:

Aye: 8 Senators Sanders, Andersen, Cavanaugh, J., Guereca, Hunt, Lonowski, McKeon, Wordekemper
Nay:
Absent:
Present Not Voting:

Testimony:

Proponents:

Senator George Dungan
Jenifer Acierno

Representing:

Opening Presenter
Nebraska Department of Veteran Affairs

Opponents:

Representing:

Neutral:

Representing:

* ADA Accommodation Written Testimony

Summary of purpose and/or changes:

This bill would create six new sections of statute relating to the establishment of a suicide mortality review team within the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA).

Section 1 would establish such a team and provides three definitions relating to that team.

Section 2 prescribes the composition of the team, which would include the agency director, a representative of the Nebraska Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS), a representative of the Nebraska Local Outreach to Suicide Loss Survivors, and a representative of the Division of Behavioral Health in the Department of Health and Human Services.

Section 3 sets out the proposed duties of the team, including development of a data collection system; preparation of an annual analysis of incidents and their causes; development of protocols for suicide investigations; study of the adequacy of related existing laws, ordinances, rules, training and services; education of the public on this topic; and designation of a team member as chairperson.



Section 4 would direct the team to establish a cooperative agreement with the NVDRS to allow information sharing and storage.

Section 5 would authorize the DVA director and the representative of the NVDRS to apply for a subpoena in order to collect information necessary to carry out the duties of the team. The section elaborates on examples of the types of information that could be obtained via such subpoenas. Requests from the review team for information would have to be satisfied within five business days. Team members and those providing them information would be shielded from questioning in all civil and criminal proceedings relating to information presented in meetings of the team. This section also prescribes an approval process required before any team member contacts family members of suicide victims.

Section 6 would direct the team to prepare and electronically submit a report to the Legislature by April 1st of each year.

Explanation of amendments:

AM 565 redefines the word "director" to refer to the director of the the Department of Veterans' Affairs or his designee. It also adds a veterans representative to the membership of the team being created under the bill.

Rita Sanders, Chairperson

