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HOUSE BILL 36

**51ST LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2013**

INTRODUCED BY

Dianne Miller Hamilton

FOR THE MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

AN ACT

RELATING TO VETERANS; CREATING 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. VETERANS VIRTUAL REALITY TREATMENT PILOT  
PROJECT--CREATED--ADMINISTRATION--TRAINING--CURRICULUM  
DEVELOPMENT--FUND CREATED.--**

A. The "veterans virtual reality treatment pilot  
project" is created as a four-year study to determine the  
efficacy of virtual reality therapy for veterans who suffer  
from posttraumatic stress disorder. The purpose of the pilot

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1 project is to:

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

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

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

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

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

19 B. The pilot project shall be administered by the  
20 veterans' services department in conjunction with western New  
21 Mexico university. The department and the university shall  
22 establish reporting and evaluation requirements for the pilot  
23 project and shall provide interim and final reports to the  
24 governor and to the legislature through the interim military  
25 and veterans' affairs and legislative health and human services

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1 committees. A copy of the reports shall be provided to the  
2 legislative council service library.

3 C. The department shall seek public and private  
4 grants and donations for the pilot project, which shall be  
5 deposited in the "veterans virtual reality treatment grants  
6 fund", created as a nonreverting fund in the state treasury.  
7 Income from investment of the fund shall be deposited in the  
8 fund. The department shall administer the fund, and money in  
9 the fund is appropriated to the department to carry out the  
10 purposes of the veterans virtual reality treatment pilot  
11 project. Money shall be expended in accordance with the terms  
12 of the grants and donations. Unless otherwise specified by the  
13 terms of a grant or donation, money in the fund at the end of  
14 the pilot project shall revert to the general fund.  
15 Expenditures from the fund shall be by warrants of the  
16 secretary of finance and administration drawn pursuant to  
17 vouchers signed by the secretary of veterans' affairs or the  
18 secretary's authorized representative.

19 **SECTION 2. APPROPRIATION.**--Two hundred fifty thousand  
20 dollars (\$250,000) is appropriated from the general fund to the  
21 veterans' services department for expenditure in fiscal years  
22 2014 through 2017 to implement the veterans virtual reality  
23 treatment pilot project. Any unexpended or unencumbered  
24 balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2017 shall revert  
25 to the general fund.

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