

I MINA'TRENTAI TRES NA LIHESLATURAN GUÅHAN
2016 (SECOND) Regular Session

Bill No. 377-33 (COR)

Introduced by:

FRANK B. AGUON, JR.



AN ACT TO ADD A NEW ARTICLE 9 TO CHAPTER 82 OF DIVISION 4, TITLE 10, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, AND ADD A NEW § 67111 AND § 67112 TO CHAPTER 67 OF DIVISION 3, TITLE 10, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO IMPROVING GOVERNMENT RESOURCES FOR VETERANS STRUGGLING WITH MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES.

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1 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF GUAM:**

2 **Section 1. Short Title.** This Act *shall* be cited as the “Paul Moore Suicide
3 Avoidance for Veterans Enduring Distress Act” or the “Paul Moore SAVED Act”.

4 **Section 2. Legislative Findings and Intent.** *I Liheslaturan Guåhan* finds that
5 the veterans of our island have not been provided with the adequate access to
6 resources and programs needed to combat mental illness. Many local veterans face
7 a large obstacle trying to navigate the complex network of resources and programs
8 available to them both locally and nationally. Furthermore, current programs do not
9 seem to be sufficient enough for veterans facing mental illness.

10 *I Liheslaturan Guåhan* further finds that there are no existing legal avenues
11 for veterans who are employed by the government of Guam and seek assistance in
12 combatting their mental illnesses. As a result of these gaps in resources and programs
13 within the government of Guam, Sergeant Paul Moore had lost in his battle with
14 post-traumatic stress disorder.

15 It is therefore the intent of *I Liheslaturan Guåhan* to provide employees of the
16 government of Guam an official policy to seek assistance in combatting any mental

17 illness, to improve upon existing government programs regarding suicide prevention
18 for veterans through the collaboration between the Office of Veterans Affairs and
19 non-profit mental health organizations, and to publish a website that *shall* act as a
20 centralized resource containing all mental healthcare services available for veterans.

21 **Section 3.** A new Article 9 is hereby *added* to Chapter 82, Division 4, Title
22 10, Guam Code Annotated, to read:

23 **“Article 9**

24 **Government Employees with Mental Issues**

25 § 82901. Development of a Mentally Ill Employee Protection Policy.

26 § 82902. Approval.

27 § 82903. Effective Date of Implementation.

28

29 **§ 82901. Development of a Mentally Ill Employee Protection**

30 **Policy.** The Director of the Guam Behavioral Health and Wellness
31 Center *shall* work jointly with the Director of the Guam Veterans
32 Affairs Office and the Director of Administration to create a policy to
33 protect government employees who are mentally ill and seek
34 assistance in treatment regarding their illness. Such a policy *shall*
35 provide for an official channel that may be utilized by any employee
36 struggling with mental illness and seeking government assistance in
37 treatment. Furthermore, this policy *shall* cover all employees of the
38 government of Guam.

39 **§ 82902. Approval.** The final draft of this policy *shall* be subject to
40 the Administrative Adjudication Law.

41 **§ 82903. Effective Date of Implementation.** An effective date of
42 implementation shall be determined by *I Liheslaturan Guåhan* at the
43 time of approval as described in § 82902 of this Section.”

44 **Section 4.** A new § 67111 is hereby *added* to Chapter 67, Division 3, Title 10,
45 Guam Code Annotated, to read:

46 “§ 67111. **Collaboration with Non-Profit Mental Health**
47 **Organizations.**

48 (a) The VAO Administrator *shall* collaborate with non-profit mental health
49 organizations to prevent suicide among veterans as follows:

50 (1) To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of suicide prevention
51 efforts carried out by the VAO Administrator and non-profit mental
52 health organizations.

53 (2) To assist non-profit mental health organizations with the suicide
54 prevention efforts of such organizations through the use of the
55 expertise of employees of the Office of Veterans Affairs.

56 (3) To jointly carry out suicide prevention efforts.

57 (b) In carrying out any collaboration under Subsection (a), the VAO
58 Administrator and any non-profit mental health organization with which
59 the VAO Administrator is collaborating under such Subsection *shall*
60 exchange training sessions and best practices to help with the suicide
61 prevention efforts of the Office of Veterans Affairs and such organization.

62 (c) The VAO Administrator *shall* select within the Office of Veterans Affairs
63 an Officer of Suicide Prevention Coordination to undertake any
64 collaboration with non-profit mental health organizations under this
65 Section or any other provision of law.”

66 **Section 5.** A new § 67112 is hereby *added* to Chapter 67, Division 3, Title 10,
67 Guam Code Annotated, to read:

68 “§ 67112. **Website Regarding Mental Health Services.**

69 (a) The VAO Administrator *shall* survey the existing pertinent websites and
70 information of the government of Guam to publish a website that *shall* act

71 as a centralized source with all information regarding mental healthcare
72 services available for veterans.

73 **(b)** The VAO Administrator *shall* ensure that the information provided on the
74 website published under Subsection (a) is updated no less than once every
75 90 days.”