

HB 2537 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans

Action Date: 04/03/25

Action: Do pass with amendments and be referred to Ways and Means by prior reference.
(Printed A-Eng.)

Vote: 6-0-1-0

Yeas: 6 - Boice, Grayber, Lewis, Skarlatos, Tran, Watanabe

Exc: 1 - Evans

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact

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Meeting Dates: 3/11, 4/3

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure creates the Veterans Waiver Program at the Oregon Health Authority.

Detailed Summary

- Defines the term "medical assistance."
- Defines "veteran" to mean the term found in ORS 408.225
- Establishes the waiver program will provide medical assistance to eligible veterans residing in Oregon.
- Specifies eligibility requirements; specifies residency and income requirements.
- Requires OHA to establish rules for the application process and to provide assistance to enrollees through various communication methods.
- Requires documentation demonstrating that an applicant's income is at or below 400 percent of the federal poverty guidelines and a federal DD Form 214 or 215.
- Allows for the use of the Veterans' Service Funds for the waiver program.
- Designates start of the wavier program to start on January 1, 2026; requires OHA to accept applications to the program starting November 1, 2025.
- Allows for a maximum limit of payment of expenses from lottery moneys allocated from the Veterans' Service Fund for the waiver program.
- Requires OHA to estimate the amount of funding needed to pay the costs of the waiver program by July 1, 2026; repeals that requirement on January 2, 2027.
- Declares emergency, effective on July 1, 2025.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Barriers to access and quality of care for Oregon veterans
- Questions about extending services to veterans released under other than honorable conditions
- Personal stories from veterans about accessing VA benefits and health concerns

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Changes the definition of "veteran" to mean the term found in ORS 408.225

BACKGROUND:

House Bill 4095 (2022) created the Veteran Dental Waiver Program at the Oregon Health Authority to provide oral health care to veterans residing in Oregon. The program expands dental care to qualified veterans who are not eligible for the Oregon Health Plan (OHP) and have an income at or below 400 percent of the federal poverty level. This measure seeks to build off that program to offer qualifying veterans general health care services.