



2017 SENATE BILL 631

December 7, 2017 - Introduced by Senators ERPENBACH, JOHNSON, CARPENTER, HANSEN, RINGHAND and LARSON, cosponsored by Representatives HINTZ, NOVAK, HESSELBEIN, SINICKI, ZAMARRIPA, ANDERSON, HEBL, MILROY, KOLSTE, BERCEAU, SUBECK, CONSIDINE, GENRICH, GOYKE, CROWLEY, SPREITZER, SARGENT, SHANKLAND and VRUWINK. Referred to Committee on Transportation and Veterans Affairs.

1 **AN ACT** *to amend* 45.40 (2) (a); and *to create* 45.40 (2) (d) and 45.40 (6) of the
2 statutes; **relating to:** health care aid for certain veterans and their family
3 members.

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau

This bill authorizes the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide needy veterans and their eligible family members with health care aid related to mental illness or treatment for substance abuse. Under current law, that aid is limited to dental, vision, and hearing care. The bill also requires DVA to provide a voucher for care related to mental illness or treatment for substance abuse within 48 hours after a request for such care, including private and emergency counseling, family and marriage counseling, and suicide prevention. The bill also authorizes DVA, at the determination of the county veterans service officer, to waive income and other financial reporting requirements to receive health care aid from DVA.

For further information see the *state* fiscal estimate, which will be printed as an appendix to this bill.

The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:

4 **SECTION 1.** 45.40 (2) (a) of the statutes is amended to read:

SENATE BILL 631**SECTION 1**

1 45.40 (2) (a) The department may provide health care aid to a veteran for
2 dental care, including dentures; vision care, including eyeglass frames and lenses;
3 ~~and hearing care, including hearing aids; and, to the extent funds are available in~~
4 the appropriation under s. 20.485 (2) (vm), care related to mental illness or treatment
5 for substance abuse.

6 **SECTION 2.** 45.40 (2) (d) of the statutes is created to read:

7 45.40 (2) (d) To the extent funds are available in the appropriation under s.
8 20.485 (2) (vm), the department shall provide a voucher for care related to mental
9 illness or treatment for substance abuse within 48 hours after a request to the
10 department or through a county veterans service office for such care, including
11 private and emergency counseling, family and marriage counseling, and suicide
12 prevention. A veteran or eligible family member is not required to be denied care at
13 a U.S. department of veterans affairs hospital or clinic or be denied coverage under
14 an insurance policy or by the U.S. department of veterans affairs or by state medical
15 assistance before seeking and receiving a voucher under this paragraph.

16 **SECTION 3.** 45.40 (6) of the statutes is created to read:

17 45.40 (6) **WAIVER OF REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.** The department may waive any
18 income or other financial reporting requirements under this section at the
19 determination of the county veterans service officer.

20

(END)