

Proposed Language Change in FINAL Military, Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Legislation to Support Community Arts Engagement

The House Appropriations Subcommittee on Military, Construction and Veterans Affairs has included in its [report language](#):

Page 30: “Partnerships.—The Committee commends the efforts of private organizations to support veterans and recognizes that they can sometimes provide services, such as counseling and wellness programs, for the families of veterans that the Department cannot. Recognizing that Congress, the Department, and private organizations share the same goal of supporting veterans, the Committee directs the Department to build upon its existing partnerships and seek opportunities to establish new ones and provides up to \$5,000,000 for this purpose. The Committee is specifically interested in partnerships focused on providing mental health care, including the mental health of veterans’ families, and requests a report on the Department’s current partnership activities within 90 days of enactment of this Act. The report should identify types of partnerships and their best practices and the opportunities, barriers, and cost of expanding them. It also should include an analysis of potential and innovative options to simplify the process for veterans seeking mental health care, such as through modifications to referral requirements, technologies to ease scheduling, and the use of telemedicine.”

Proposed Amendment to Community Arts Engagement:

Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Partnerships.—The Committee supports the Department working with private entities across the clinic community continuum to support mental health and suicide prevention for veterans, veterans’ family members, and caregivers through successful practices and partnerships with arts and humanities organizations. The Committee provides up to \$5,000,000 to the VHA Innovation Ecosystem to build upon the Department’s existing partnerships and establish new relationships to scale best practices, enhance innovative, and demonstrate solutions. The Committee requests a report on the Department’s current partnership activities using arts and humanities to address the mental health and suicide prevention needs of veterans, veteran’s family members, and caregivers within 120 days of enactment of this Act. The report shall include existing partnerships, best practices, opportunities for innovation, associated costs, and a strategy for VHA to support and expand clinic to community collaborations to access arts and humanities programming.