

Introduced by Senators Becker and Jones

(Principal coauthor: Assembly Member Lowenthal)

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(Coauthors: Assembly Members Bryan, Flora, Jackson, and Wallis)

February 21, 2025

An act to add and repeal Article 6 (commencing with Section 11310) of Chapter 5 of Division 10 of the Health and Safety Code, relating to controlled substances, and making an appropriation therefor.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 751, as introduced, Becker. Veterans and First Responders Research Pilot Program.

Existing law makes it a crime to possess, cultivate, and administer specified controlled substances, including psilocybin and psilocyn. Existing law makes it a crime for a person to rent, lease, or make available for use any building or room for the purpose of storing or distributing any controlled substance.

This bill would, until January 1, 2031, require the California Health and Human Services Agency to oversee a Veterans and First Responders Research Pilot Program to allow for the research and development of psilocybin services for target populations, as defined, in up to 5 counties. The bill would authorize the agency to operate in partnerships with the University of California system. The bill would request the University of California to oversee each local pilot program as a university partner responsible for protocol design, institutional review board approvals, training of psilocybin facilitators, data collection, and reporting. The bill would require each local pilot program to partner with local mental health clinics, hospice programs, veterans facilities, or other

community-based providers that provide services and care to the target population.

This bill would require the agency to report specified information about the pilot program to the Legislature by January 15, 2030. The bill would establish the Veterans and First Responders Research Pilot Special Fund and would continuously appropriate the fund to the agency for the purposes of these provisions. The bill would authorize the agency to apply for and accept grants, donations, and federal funding for the purposes of the pilot program, and would require those moneys to be deposited in the fund.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: yes. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

- 1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the
- 2 following:
- 3 (a) Every day, an average of 17.6 veterans commit suicide.
- 4 (b) Similarly troubling, first responders, including law
- 5 enforcement officers and firefighters, are more likely to die by
- 6 suicide than in the line of duty. The Legislature acknowledges that
- 7 one veteran or first responder life lost to suicide is too many.
- 8 (c) The Legislature acknowledges the significant mental health
- 9 challenges veterans and former first responders face. These
- 10 individuals are often exposed to traumatic experiences that can
- 11 lead to conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder,
- 12 depression, and anxiety.
- 13 (d) Emerging research suggests that psilocybin and psilocyn,
- 14 when used in a controlled setting, may offer significant benefits
- 15 in treating mental health disorders, particularly those related to
- 16 trauma and stress. The United States Food and Drug Administration
- 17 has determined that preliminary clinical evidence indicates
- 18 psilocybin may demonstrate substantial improvement over available
- 19 therapies for treatment-resistant depression and has granted a
- 20 breakthrough therapy designation for a treatment that uses
- 21 psilocybin as a therapy for treatment-resistant depression.
- 22 (e) Psilocybin should be available to veterans and former first
- 23 responders in a manner that ensures safety, efficacy, and ethical
- 24 standards, including use only under qualified supervision.

1 (f) California can conduct federally regulated pilot trials of
2 psilocybin services in partnership with community-based licensed
3 health care settings to determine if and how psilocybin can be
4 provided to veterans and first responders in a beneficial and
5 effective manner.

6 SEC. 2. The purpose of this act is to establish a pilot program
7 to develop and study protocols for providing psilocybin in strict
8 compliance with United States Food and Drug Administration and
9 United States Drug Enforcement Administration regulations, for
10 the benefit of certain target populations.

11 SEC. 3. Article 6 (commencing with Section 11310) is added
12 to Chapter 5 of Division 10 of the Health and Safety Code, to read:

13
14 Article 6. Veterans and First Responders Research Pilot
15 Program
16

17 11310. For the purposes of this article, the following definitions
18 apply:

19 (a) “Agency” means the California Health and Human Services
20 Agency.

21 (b) “Community-based providers” means licensed health care
22 and community-based providers, including, but not limited to,
23 mental health clinics, hospice organizations, veterans organizations,
24 and other therapeutic care organizations.

25 (c) “Veterans and First Responders Research Pilot Program”
26 refers to a structured initiative designed to provide regulated and
27 investigational psilocybin services for adults within a target
28 population with qualifying conditions, compliant with United
29 States Food and Drug Administration and United States Drug
30 Enforcement Administration regulations.

31 (d) “Local pilot” refers to the operation of the Veterans and
32 First Responders Research Pilot Program within each of the
33 participating counties.

34 (e) “Psilocybin” means a naturally occurring psychedelic
35 compound derived from specific species of fungi.

36 (f) “Target population” refers to veterans and inactive first
37 responders with post-traumatic stress disorder, end-of-life distress,
38 or other specified conditions, as determined by program criteria
39 and local needs.

(g) “University partners” refers to accredited institutions within the University of California system responsible for overseeing Veterans and First Responders Research Pilot Program activities.

11311. (a) Notwithstanding any other law, the agency shall establish and oversee the Veterans and First Responders Research Pilot Program to allow for the research and development of psilocybin services for target populations in up to five counties.

(b) The pilot program may operate in partnerships with the University of California system.

11312. (a) The University of California is requested to oversee each local pilot program as a university partner. These university partners shall be responsible for protocol design, institutional review board approvals, administration, data collection, and reporting.

(b) The local pilot shall partner with local mental health clinics, hospice programs, veterans facilities, or other community-based providers that provide services and care to the target population.

11313. The university partner overseeing each local pilot shall maintain strict protocols following the most recent guidelines from the United States Food and Drug Administration related to clinical trials for psychedelics.

11314. Each local pilot shall collect and provide data relevant to the success of the pilot program to the agency, as determined with input from the agency.

11315. (a) The agency shall enter into an agreement with each university partner approved for participation in the pilot program. The agreement shall specify, at a minimum, all of the following:

- (1) The amount of funding available to the local pilot.
- (2) The conditions under which payments will be made.
- (3) Data collection and sharing requirements.
- (4) Reporting requirements.

(b) The sharing of health information, records, and other data with and among pilot entities and participating entities shall be permitted to the extent necessary for the activities and purposes set forth in this chapter.

(c) The agency shall research whether national data-sharing programs or practice-based research networks exist for psychedelic research and shall encourage university partners to participate in those programs if they are operational and consistent with quality

1 standards for similar collaborative research networks in other health
2 fields.

3 11316. (a) University partners are requested to submit midyear
4 and annual reports to the agency, in accordance with schedules
5 and guidelines established by the agency.

6 (b) University partners are requested to confer and choose a
7 single independent entity to conduct a peer-reviewed study of the
8 statewide efficacy of the pilot program and the community impacts
9 of the local pilots. The study shall be submitted to the Legislature
10 and the Governor's office on or before January 15, 2029.

11 (c) By no later than January 15, 2030, the agency shall compile
12 and submit the pilot program outcomes, data analysis, and
13 recommendations from the university partners into a
14 comprehensive report to the Legislature.

15 (d) A report to be submitted pursuant to this section shall be
16 submitted in compliance with Section 9795 of the Government
17 Code.

18 11317. (a) The Veterans and First Responders Research Pilot
19 Special Fund is hereby established in the State Treasury.
20 Notwithstanding Section 13340 of the Government Code, moneys
21 deposited in the Veterans and First Responders Research Pilot
22 Special Fund pursuant to this section shall be continuously
23 appropriated, without regard to fiscal years, to the agency for the
24 purposes of this article.

25 (b) The agency may apply for and accept grants, donations, and
26 federal funding for the purposes of this article. Any moneys
27 received pursuant to this subdivision shall be deposited in the
28 Veterans and First Responders Research Pilot Special Fund.

29 (c) Moneys in the Veterans and First Responders Research Pilot
30 Special Fund shall be used for, but are not limited to, all of the
31 following purposes:

- 32 (1) Program administration and oversight.
- 33 (2) Training of medical staff and research supervisors.
- 34 (3) Data collection, analysis, and reporting.
- 35 (4) Community engagement and education initiatives.

36 11318. This article shall remain in effect only until January 1,
37 2031, and as of that date is repealed.