

**SENATE CONCURRENT  
RESOLUTION No. 142**

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY  
215th LEGISLATURE**

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 21, 2013

**Sponsored by:**

**Senator JEFF VAN DREW**

**District 1 (Atlantic, Cape May and Cumberland)**

**Senator CHRISTOPHER J. CONNORS**

**District 9 (Atlantic, Burlington and Ocean)**

**Co-Sponsored by:**

**Senators A.R.Bucco and Allen**

**SYNOPSIS**

Urges federal Department of Veterans Affairs to support recommendations of New Jersey Veterans Hospital Task Force.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



**(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 5/31/2013)**

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1 **A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION** urging the federal Department of  
2 Veterans Affairs to support the recommendations of the New  
3 Jersey Veterans Hospital Task Force.

4  
5 **WHEREAS**, The New Jersey Veterans Hospital Task Force was created  
6 pursuant to P.L.2011, c.21, which was signed into law by Governor  
7 Chris Christie on February 3, 2011; and

8 **WHEREAS**, The mission of the task force was to study and evaluate,  
9 and make recommendations related to the construction and  
10 operation of a veterans' health care facility in southern New  
11 Jersey; and

12 **WHEREAS**, The task force was comprised of 18 members, including  
13 the Adjutant General of the Department of Military and Veterans  
14 Affairs, the Commissioner of the Department of Health and Senior  
15 Services, two members of the New Jersey Senate, two members of  
16 the New Jersey General Assembly, and 12 members of the public  
17 who were prominent veterans leaders from across the State or  
18 experts in healthcare issues effecting veterans; and

19 **WHEREAS**, During its meetings, the members of the task force  
20 received testimony from veterans about the significant challenges  
21 faced by veterans seeking healthcare and the at-times demeaning  
22 process they had to go through to meet their healthcare needs,  
23 including traveling considerable distances from their homes in  
24 southern New Jersey, in some cases resulting in trips of more than  
25 100 miles and five hours travel time, and then spending additional  
26 time waiting for a meeting with a doctor; and

27 **WHEREAS**, The task force has concluded that there is a significant  
28 need for more healthcare opportunities for veterans living in  
29 southern New Jersey who must travel to veterans clinics in East  
30 Orange, New Jersey, Wilmington, Delaware or Philadelphia,  
31 Pennsylvania, to have their healthcare needs addressed; and

32 **WHEREAS**, This situation is unfair to these New Jersey veterans who  
33 have served their country with distinction and deserve to have  
34 closer, more accessible healthcare as they grow older and travel  
35 becomes more difficult; and

36 **WHEREAS**, The task force has formulated 10 recommendations that it  
37 believes should be given careful consideration and then acted on by  
38 the federal Department of Veterans Affairs; and

39 **WHEREAS**, The Legislature believes it is fitting and proper to concur  
40 with these recommendations and urges the federal Department of  
41 Veterans Affairs to support their implementation; now, therefore,

42  
43 **BE IT RESOLVED** by the Senate of the State of New Jersey (the  
44 General Assembly concurring):

45  
46 1. This Legislature calls on the federal Department of Veterans  
47 Affairs to support the following 10 recommendations:

- 1 a. Recognize that the deficiencies in the healthcare needs of  
2 veterans living in southern New Jersey is a serious problem that  
3 must be addressed as soon as possible;
- 4 b. Assuming that the construction of a new veterans healthcare  
5 facility in southern New Jersey is not feasible, create a pilot  
6 program to give area veterans greater access to local medical  
7 centers, including Cape May Regional Medical Center, the Virtua  
8 System, Atlanticare, Shore Memorial Hospital, the South Jersey  
9 Health Care System, the Meridian Health Care System, the  
10 Bacharach Institute for Rehabilitation, to name just a few of the  
11 healthcare facilities that are interested in participating in the  
12 program;
- 13 c. Recognize that such a pilot program, administered by the  
14 department, would save money and greatly enhance healthcare  
15 opportunities for all veterans living in southern New Jersey;
- 16 d. Move the approximately 44,600 veterans who live in Ocean  
17 County into VISN 4 from their current VISN, so that veterans from  
18 that county, which has the greatest number of veterans in the State,  
19 would no longer need to travel as much as four to six hours round  
20 trip to get to East Orange, Wilmington or Philadelphia for  
21 healthcare services;
- 22 e. Determine what services are available at each community  
23 based outpatient clinic and increase communication among all  
24 community based outpatient clinics;
- 25 f. Provide additional, readily-accessible, information about the  
26 healthcare services, outreach services and varied information  
27 sources that are available currently to veterans living in southern  
28 New Jersey;
- 29 g. Focus greater attention on the healthcare needs of women  
30 veterans;
- 31 h. Provide additional staffing to all community based outpatient  
32 clinics where needed and appropriate, including the Northfield  
33 Veterans Clinic, the Cape May VA Outpatient Clinic and the  
34 Vineland Veterans Clinic, which are admirable facilities that lack  
35 sufficient personnel to provide the essential services and address  
36 adequately the needs of local veterans;
- 37 i. Establish a continuing veterans oversight committee for the  
38 State, composed of three individuals, one each from North, Central  
39 and Southern New Jersey, that would be a bridge between the State  
40 and the federal government, and that would also be a liaison to each  
41 major civilian healthcare facility that serves veterans in the State;
- 42 j. Provide, in particular, a liaison for each major civilian  
43 healthcare facility in the southern New Jersey area to assist those  
44 veterans who use the fee-based services offered at such facilities,  
45 and to assist the hospitals to interact successfully with the  
46 Department of Veterans Affairs on behalf of veterans living in  
47 southern New Jersey.



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