

114TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 1604

To amend the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 to expand the eligibility of veterans to receive mental health care at non-Department of Veterans Affairs facilities.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 25, 2015

Mr. MACARTHUR (for himself and Mr. O'ROURKE) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

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## A BILL

To amend the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 to expand the eligibility of veterans to receive mental health care at non-Department of Veterans Affairs facilities.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Veterans’ Mental  
5 Health Care Access Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) There is a widely recognized crisis of post-  
2 traumatic stress disorder and other service-related  
3 mental health disorders among veterans.

4 (2) Every day on average in the United States,  
5 22 veterans commit suicide.

6 (3) Of those 22 veterans, 17 never pursued  
7 mental health care from a facility of the Department  
8 of Veterans Affairs.

9 (4) Veterans need to be able to immediately ac-  
10 cess mental health care from any provider within or  
11 outside of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

12 **SEC. 3. PROVISION OF MENTAL HEALTH CARE UNDER VET-**  
13 **ERANS CHOICE PROGRAM.**

14 Section 101(b)(2) of the Veterans Access, Choice,  
15 and Accountability Act of 2014 (38 U.S.C. 1701 note) is  
16 amended—

17 (1) in subparagraph (C)(ii), by striking “or”;

18 (2) in subparagraph (D), by striking the period  
19 at the end and inserting “; or”; and

20 (3) by adding at the end the following new sub-  
21 paragraph:

22 “(E) notwithstanding paragraph (1)(A),  
23 seeks mental health care at an entity described  
24 in clause (i) or (ii) of subsection (a)(1)(B), re-  
25 gardless of—

1           “(i) the date on which the veteran en-  
2           rolled in the patient enrollment system of  
3           the Department under section 1705 of title  
4           38, United States Code;

5           “(ii) whether the veteran has at-  
6           tempted to schedule an appointment for  
7           the receipt of such care at a facility of the  
8           Department; or

9           “(iii) the location of the residence of  
10          the veteran.”.

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