

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1965

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to improve long-term care provided to veterans by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 8, 2021

Mrs. MURRAY introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to improve long-term care provided to veterans by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

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 “Planning for Aging
5 Veterans Act of 2021”.

6 **SEC. 2. STRATEGY FOR LONG-TERM CARE FOR AGING VET-**
7 **ERANS.**

8 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs
9 shall develop a strategy for the long-term care of veterans.

1 (b) ELEMENTS.—The strategy developed under sub-
2 section (a) shall—

3 (1) identify current and future needs for the
4 long-term care of veterans based on demographic
5 data and availability of services both from Depart-
6 ment of Veterans Affairs and from non-Department
7 providers in the community, include other Federal
8 Government, non-Federal Government, nonprofit, for
9 profit, and other entities;

10 (2) identify the current and future needs of vet-
11 erans for both institutional and non-institutional
12 long-term care (for example, home-based and com-
13 munity-based services), taking into account the
14 needs of growing veteran population groups, includ-
15 ing women veterans, veterans with traumatic brain
16 injury, veterans with memory loss, and other popu-
17 lation groups with unique needs; and

18 (3) address new and different care delivery
19 models, including by—

20 (A) assessing the implications of such mod-
21 els for the design of facilities and how those fa-
22 cilities may need to change; and

23 (B) examining the workforce needed to
24 support aging populations of veterans as they

1 grow and receive long-term care through dif-
2 ferent trends of care delivery.

3 (c) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date
4 of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit
5 to Congress a report on the strategy developed under sub-
6 section (a).

7 **SEC. 3. IMPROVEMENT OF STATE VETERANS HOMES.**

8 (a) STANDARDIZED SHARING AGREEMENTS.—The
9 Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall develop a standardized
10 process throughout the Department of Veterans Affairs
11 for entering into sharing agreements between State homes
12 and medical centers of the Department.

13 (b) CLARIFICATION ON COPAYMENTS FOR CERTAIN
14 DISABLED VETERANS.—The Secretary shall ensure that
15 all veterans who are catastrophically disabled, as defined
16 by the Secretary under section 1730A of title 38, United
17 States Code, are not required to pay a copayment for
18 medication received at a State home.

19 (c) OVERSIGHT OF INSPECTIONS.—

20 (1) MONITORING.—The Secretary shall monitor
21 any contractor used by the Department to conduct
22 inspections of State homes, including by reviewing
23 the inspections conducted by each such contractor
24 for quality not less frequently than quarterly.

1 (2) REPORTING OF DEFICIENCIES.—The Sec-
 2 retary shall require that any deficiencies of a State
 3 home noted during the inspection of the State home
 4 be reported to the Secretary.

5 (3) TRANSPARENCY.—The Secretary shall pub-
 6 lish the results of any inspection of a State home on
 7 a publicly available internet website of the Depart-
 8 ment.

9 (d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section, the term “State
 10 home” has the meaning given that term in section 101(19)
 11 of title 38, United States Code.

12 **SEC. 4. GERIATRIC PSYCHIATRY PILOT PROGRAM AT**
 13 **STATE VETERANS HOMES.**

14 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the
 15 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Vet-
 16 erans Affairs shall commence the conduct of a pilot pro-
 17 gram under which the Secretary shall provide geriatric
 18 psychiatry assistance to eligible veterans at State homes.

19 (b) DURATION.—The Secretary shall carry out the
 20 pilot program under this section for a two-year period.

21 (c) TYPE OF ASSISTANCE.—Assistance provided
 22 under the pilot program under this section may include—

23 (1) direct provision of geriatric psychiatry serv-
 24 ices, including health care if feasible;

1 (2) payments to non-Department of Veterans
2 Affairs providers in the community to provide such
3 services;

4 (3) collaboration with other Federal agencies to
5 provide such services; or

6 (4) such other forms of assistance as the Sec-
7 retary considers appropriate.

8 (d) CONSIDERATION OF LOCAL AREA NEEDS.—In
9 providing assistance under the pilot program under this
10 section, the Secretary shall consider the geriatric psychi-
11 atry needs of the local area, including by considering—

12 (1) State homes with a high proportion of resi-
13 dents with unmet mental health needs;

14 (2) State homes located in mental health care
15 health professional shortage areas designated under
16 section 332 of the Public Health Service Act (42
17 U.S.C. 254e); or

18 (3) State homes located in rural or highly rural
19 areas.

20 (e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

21 (1) ACTIVE MILITARY, NAVAL, OR AIR SERV-
22 ICE.—The term “active military, naval, or air serv-
23 ice” has the meaning given that term in section
24 101(24) of title 38, United States Code.

1 (2) ELIGIBLE VETERAN.—The term “eligible
 2 veteran” means a veteran who the Secretary deter-
 3 mines would benefit from access to geriatric psychi-
 4 atry services, including veterans who sustained a
 5 traumatic brain injury or posttraumatic stress dis-
 6 order in line of duty in the active military, naval, or
 7 air service.

8 (3) STATE HOME.—The term “State home” has
 9 the meaning given that term in section 101(19) of
 10 title 38, United States Code.

11 **SEC. 5. SUPPORT FOR AGING VETERANS AT RISK OF OR EX-**
 12 **PERIENCING HOMELESSNESS.**

13 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs
 14 shall work with public housing authorities and local orga-
 15 nizations to assist aging homeless veterans in accessing
 16 existing housing and supportive services, including health
 17 services like home-based and community-based services
 18 from the Department of Veterans Affairs or from non-De-
 19 partment providers in the community, even if the veteran
 20 is not eligible for such services from the Department.

21 (b) PAYMENT FOR SERVICES.—The Secretary may,
 22 and is encouraged to, pay for services for aging homeless
 23 veterans described in subsection (a).

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