

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 4951

To amend title 38, United States Code, to prohibit collection of copayments for the first three outpatient mental health care visits of veterans each calendar year, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 27, 2022

Mr. OSSOFF (for himself and Mr. CRAMER) introduced the following bill;
which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to prohibit collection of copayments for the first three outpatient mental health care visits of veterans each calendar year, 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 “Reduce and Eliminate
5 Mental Health Outpatient Veteran Copays Act” or the
6 “REMOVE Copays Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. PROHIBITION ON COLLECTION OF COPAYMENTS**
 2 **FOR FIRST THREE MENTAL HEALTH CARE**
 3 **OUTPATIENT VISITS OF VETERANS.**

4 (a) PROHIBITION ON COLLECTION.—

5 (1) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter III of chapter
 6 17, United States Code, is amended by inserting
 7 after section 1722B the following new section:

8 **“§ 1722C. Copayments: prohibition on collection of**
 9 **copayments for first three mental health**
 10 **care outpatient visits of veterans**

11 “(a) PROHIBITION.—Except as provided in sub-
 12 section (b), notwithstanding section 1710(g) of this title
 13 or any other provision of law, the Secretary may not im-
 14 pose or collect a copayment for the first three mental
 15 health care outpatient visits of a veteran in a calendar
 16 year for which the veteran would otherwise be required
 17 to pay a copayment under the laws administered by the
 18 Secretary.

19 “(b) COPAYMENT FOR MEDICATIONS.—The prohibi-
 20 tion under subsection (a) shall not apply with respect to
 21 the imposition or collection of copayments for medications
 22 pursuant to section 1722A of this title.

23 “(c) MENTAL HEALTH CARE OUTPATIENT VISIT DE-
 24 FINED.—In this section, the term ‘mental health care out-
 25 patient visit’ means an outpatient visit with a qualified
 26 mental health professional for the primary purpose of

1 seeking mental health care or treatment for substance
2 abuse disorder.”.

3 (2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sec-
4 tions at the beginning of such subchapter is amend-
5 ed by inserting after the item related to section
6 1722B the following new item:

“1722C. Copayments: prohibition on collection of copayments for first three
mental health care outpatient visits of veterans.”.

7 (b) APPLICABILITY.—The amendments made by sub-
8 section (a) shall apply with respect to mental health care
9 outpatient visits occurring on or after the date that is 180
10 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

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