

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3189

To increase language access to behavioral health services at eligible health centers, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 10, 2023

Ms. MENG (for herself, Mr. FITZPATRICK, and Ms. CLARKE of New York) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

A BILL

To increase language access to behavioral health services at eligible health centers, 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 “Mental Health Work-
5 force and Language Access Act of 2023”.

6 **SEC. 2. DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM TO INCREASE LAN-**
7 **GUAGE ACCESS AT ELIGIBLE HEALTH CEN-**
8 **TERS.**

9 (a) GRANTS.—The Secretary shall carry out a dem-
10 onstration program consisting of awarding supplemental

1 grants under section 330 of the Public Health Service Act
2 (42 U.S.C. 254b) to eligible health centers to recruit, hire,
3 employ, and supervise qualified behavioral health profes-
4 sionals who—

5 (1) are proficient in speaking and under-
6 standing both spoken English and at least one other
7 spoken language, including any necessary specialized
8 vocabulary, terminology, and phraseology;

9 (2) are able to effectively, accurately, and im-
10 partially communicate directly with limited English
11 proficient individuals in their primary language; and

12 (3) are, or will be, employed—

13 (A) directly by the eligible health center; or

14 (B) through a contract between the eligible
15 health center and the qualified behavioral
16 health professional that provides for supervision
17 of the professional by the health center in order
18 to provide behavioral health services in another
19 language.

20 (b) PREFERENCE.—In selecting grant recipients
21 under subsection (a), the Secretary shall give preference
22 to eligible health centers at which at least 10 percent of
23 the patients are best served in a language other than
24 English, as indicated by data in the Uniform Data System
25 (or any successor database).

1 (c) MARKETING.—An eligible health center receiving
2 a grant under this section shall use a portion of the grant
3 funds to disseminate information about, and otherwise
4 market, the behavioral health services supported through
5 the grant.

6 (d) REPORTS.—

7 (1) INITIAL REPORT.—Not later than 6 months
8 after the first grants are awarded under subsection
9 (a), the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on
10 Appropriations and Energy and Commerce of the
11 House of Representatives, the Committees on Appro-
12 priations and Health, Education, Labor, and Pen-
13 sions of the Senate, and other appropriate congres-
14 sional committees, a report on the implementation of
15 the program under this section. Such report shall in-
16 clude—

17 (A) the languages spoken by the qualified
18 behavioral health professionals recruited pursu-
19 ant to a grant under subsection (a);

20 (B) the eligible health center at which each
21 such professional was placed;

22 (C) how many eligible health centers re-
23 ceived grants under subsection (a);

24 (D) an analysis, conducted in consultation
25 with the eligible health centers receiving grants

1 under subsection (a), of the effectiveness of
2 such grants at increasing language access to be-
3 havioral health services; and

4 (E) best practices, developed in consulta-
5 tion with eligible health centers receiving grants
6 under subsection (a), for the recruitment and
7 retention of qualified behavioral health profes-
8 sionals at such health centers.

9 (2) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than the end of
10 fiscal year 2026, the Secretary shall submit to the
11 Committees on Appropriations and Energy and
12 Commerce of the House of Representatives, the
13 Committees on Appropriations and Health, Edu-
14 cation, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate, and other
15 appropriate congressional committees, a final report
16 on the implementation of the program under this
17 section, including the information, analysis, and best
18 practices described in subparagraphs (A) through
19 (E) of paragraph (1).

20 (e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

21 (1) The term “eligible health center” means a
22 health center (as defined in section 330 of the Pub-
23 lic Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 254b)) that is al-
24 ready receiving assistance pursuant to one or more
25 grants under such section 330 at the time of the

1 award to such health center of a supplemental grant
2 under subsection (a).

3 (2) The term “qualified behavioral health pro-
4 fessional” means—

5 (A) a behavioral and mental health profes-
6 sional (as defined in section 331(a)(3)(E)(i) of
7 the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C.
8 254d(a)(3)(E)(i)));

9 (B) substance use disorder counselor;

10 (C) an occupational therapist; or

11 (D) an individual who—

12 (i) has not yet been licensed or cer-
13 tified to serve as a professional listed in
14 any of subparagraphs (A) through (C);
15 and

16 (ii) will serve at the eligible health
17 center under the supervision of a licensed
18 individual or certified professional so list-
19 ed.

20 (3) The term “Secretary” means the Secretary
21 of Health and Human Services.

22 (f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

23 (1) IN GENERAL.—To carry out this section,
24 there is authorized to be appropriated \$10,000,000
25 for each of fiscal years 2024 through 2029.

1 (2) SUPPLEMENT NOT SUPPLANT.—Amounts
2 made available to carry out this section shall be in
3 addition to amounts otherwise available to carry out
4 section 330 of the Public Health Service Act (42
5 U.S.C. 254b).

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