

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 2975

To amend title 38, United States Code, to improve payment and processing of payments or allowances for beneficiary travel, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 28 (legislative day, SEPTEMBER 22), 2023

Mr. MORAN (for himself and Mr. TESTER) 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 improve payment and processing of payments or allowances for beneficiary travel, 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 “Road to Access Act
5 of 2023”.

6 **SEC. 2. IMPROVEMENTS RELATING TO DEPARTMENT OF**
7 **VETERANS AFFAIRS BENEFICIARY TRAVEL.**

8 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 111 of title 38, United
9 States Code. is amended by adding at the end the fol-
10 lowing new subsections:

1 “(h) The Secretary shall accept claims for reimburse-
2 ment for expenses under subsection (a) submitted to the
3 Secretary on or before the date that is 180 days after the
4 date of eligible travel, or such later date as the Secretary
5 considers appropriate.

6 “(i) For the first instance of care a person receives
7 at a Department facility each year or that is authorized
8 by the Department, the Secretary shall send the veteran
9 written outreach providing information on the payments
10 and allowances available under this section and encour-
11 aging the person to submit a claim for allowance under
12 this section. Such communication may also include infor-
13 mation about programs described in section 111A of this
14 title available through facilities local to the person.

15 “(j) For each claim of a person for allowance or reim-
16 bursement denied under this section, the Secretary shall
17 inform the person regarding—

18 “(1) the reason for the denial; and

19 “(2) the options available to the person for—

20 “(A) resubmitting the claim; or

21 “(B) appealing the denial.

22 “(k)(1) To the extent practicable, not later than one
23 year after the date of the enactment of the Road to Access
24 Act of 2023, the Secretary shall establish a policy whereby
25 a veteran described in paragraph (2) who is eligible for

1 reimbursement under this section have mileage reimburse-
2 ment claims submitted on their behalf for review by the
3 Department for any care provided at a facility of the De-
4 partment or by the staff of the Department.

5 “(2) A veteran described in this paragraph is a vet-
6 eran—

7 “(A) with a service-connected disability rate at
8 50 percent or more;

9 “(B) with a disability as defined in section 3 of
10 the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42
11 U.S.C. 12102);

12 “(C) without reasonable access to the Bene-
13 ficiary Travel Self Service System, or successor sys-
14 tem with similar functions, including lack of access
15 to reliable mobile telephone or internet service or not
16 in possession of the appropriate technology for ac-
17 cessing the Beneficiary Travel Self Service System,
18 or successor system; or

19 “(D) reliant upon a caregiver or other resource
20 to submit a claim on behalf of the veteran due to a
21 mental or physical limitation.

22 “(l) The Secretary shall—

23 “(1) allow any person submitting a claim for al-
24 lowance or payment under this section to submit the
25 claim in a paper or other format that does not re-

1 quire access to technology devices, mobile telephone
2 service, or internet service;

3 “(2) educate relevant staff of the Department
4 regarding this access requirement described in para-
5 graph (1); and

6 “(3) provide reasonable and equitable access to
7 the alternatives offered by paragraph (1).”.

8 (b) UPDATES TO CERTAIN TECHNOLOGY SYS-
9 TEMS.—Not later than two years after the date of the en-
10 actment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs
11 shall complete such updates and modifications to tech-
12 nology systems of the Department of Veterans Affairs as
13 the Secretary considers appropriate to carry out sub-
14 section (k) of section 111 of such title, as added by sub-
15 section (a) of this section.

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