

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 3641

To require the Secretary of Defense to establish a pilot program for evidence-based perinatal mental health prevention for pregnant and postpartum members of the Armed Forces and dependents, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JANUARY 23, 2024

Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself and Mrs. FISCHER) introduced the following bill;
which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Armed Services

A BILL

To require the Secretary of Defense to establish a pilot program for evidence-based perinatal mental health prevention for pregnant and postpartum members of the Armed Forces and dependents, 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 “Maintaining Our Obli-
5 gation to Moms Who Serve Act of 2024” or the “MOMS
6 Who Serve Act of 2024”.

1 **SEC. 2. PREVENTING PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH CONDI-**
2 **TIONS AMONGST PREGNANT AND**
3 **POSTPARTUM SERVICEWOMEN AND DEPEND-**
4 **ENTS TO IMPROVE MILITARY READINESS.**

5 (a) PILOT PROGRAM.—

6 (1) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 180 days
7 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-
8 retary, acting through the Director of the Defense
9 Health Agency, shall establish a pilot program to as-
10 sess the feasibility and impact of providing evidence-
11 based perinatal mental health prevention programs
12 for eligible members and dependents within military
13 treatment facilities with the goal of reducing the
14 rates of perinatal mental health conditions and im-
15 proving the military readiness of members of the
16 Armed Forces and their families.

17 (2) IMPLEMENTATION.—In implementing the
18 pilot program, the Secretary shall—

19 (A) integrate evidence-based perinatal
20 mental health prevention programs for eligible
21 members and dependents within existing mater-
22 nal or pediatric care or programming, including
23 primary care, obstetric care, pediatric care, and
24 family and parenting programs, when applica-
25 ble;

26 (B) select sites for the pilot program—

1 (i) in a manner that represents the di-
2 versity of the Armed Forces, including—

3 (I) not fewer than 2 military
4 treatment facilities for each military
5 department; and

6 (II) geographically diverse sites
7 across the United States, excluding
8 any territory or possession of the
9 United States; and

10 (ii) by prioritizing of military treat-
11 ment facilities with established maternal
12 health programs or women’s clinics;

13 (C) implement the prevention programs at
14 times, locations, and in a manner that
15 incentivizes participation by eligible members
16 and dependents, including by removing barriers
17 to participation, such as childcare availability,
18 differences in military rank and occupation, and
19 any other factors as the Secretary shall deter-
20 mine; and

21 (D) increase awareness of and encourage
22 participation in care and programming for eligi-
23 ble members and dependents.

24 (b) ADVISORY COMMITTEE.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after
2 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary
3 shall establish an advisory committee to assist the
4 Secretary in implementing the pilot program pursu-
5 ant to subsection (a)(2).

6 (2) COMPOSITION.—Members of the advisory
7 committee shall—

8 (A) be appointed by the Secretary; and

9 (B) include—

10 (i) members of the Armed Forces and
11 dependents, including individuals who—

12 (I) are or have experienced
13 perinatal care in the previous five
14 years while in the Armed Forces;

15 (II) represent various military
16 departments and ranks; and

17 (III) experienced a perinatal
18 mental health condition.

19 (ii) individuals with experience at mili-
20 tary and veteran service organizations;

21 (iii) experts in perinatal mental health
22 promotion, prevention, and intervention;
23 and

1 (iv) representatives from the Federal
2 Maternal Mental Health Hotline and re-
3 lated perinatal mental health programs.

4 (3) DUTIES.—In implementing the pilot pro-
5 gram pursuant to subsection (a)(2), the advisory
6 committee shall provide recommendations to the Sec-
7 retary with respect to the following:

8 (A) Identification of evidence-based
9 perinatal prevention programs.

10 (B) Strategies to increase diversity in par-
11 ticipation of eligible members and dependents.

12 (C) Outreach to eligible members and de-
13 pendents on the benefits of prevention and the
14 availability of pilot program participation.

15 (D) Strategies to reduce stigma with re-
16 spect to perinatal mental health conditions and
17 the use of prevention programs.

18 (4) TERMINATION.—Section 1013 of title 5,
19 United States Code, shall not apply to the advisory
20 committee.

21 (c) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary shall
22 provide technical assistance to military treatment facilities
23 in implementing evidence-based perinatal prevention pro-
24 grams pursuant to subsection (a) and outside of the pilot
25 program.

1 (d) STUDY.—Not later than June 30, 2029, the Sec-
2 retary shall conduct a study of the effectiveness of the
3 pilot program in preventing or reducing the onset of symp-
4 toms of perinatal mental health conditions for eligible and
5 dependents.

6 (e) REPORTS.—

7 (1) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than 180 days
8 after the date of the enactment of this Act, and an-
9 nually thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to the
10 congressional defense committees a report on the
11 progress of the pilot program during the previous
12 calendar year, including the number of eligible mem-
13 bers and dependents completing a prevention pro-
14 gram, disaggregated by type of prevention program,
15 military component, military occupation, rank, mar-
16 ital status, location and setting of delivery, sex, age,
17 race, and ethnicity.

18 (2) FINAL REPORT.—

19 (A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days
20 after the termination of the pilot program
21 under subsection (g), the Secretary shall submit
22 to the congressional defense committees a final
23 report, which shall include—

24 (i) the progress of the pilot program
25 during the life of the pilot program;

1 (ii) the number of eligible members
2 and dependents who completed a preven-
3 tion program during the life of the pilot
4 program, disaggregated by type of preven-
5 tion program, military component, military
6 occupation, rank, marital status, location
7 and setting of delivery, sex, age, race, and
8 ethnicity;

9 (iii) an assessment and findings with
10 respect to the study required by subsection
11 (e);

12 (iv) recommendations on whether the
13 pilot program should be continued or more
14 widely adopted by the Department of De-
15 fense; and

16 (v) recommendations on how to scale
17 the pilot program and ensure cost-effective
18 sustainability.

19 (B) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—The final re-
20 port shall be made publicly available on a
21 website of the Department of Defense.

22 (f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
23 authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
24 \$5,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2025 through 2029.

1 (g) SUNSET.—The pilot program shall terminate on
2 December 31, 2029.

3 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

4 In this Act:

5 (1) CONGRESSIONAL DEFENSE COMMITTEES.—

6 The term “congressional defense committees” has
7 the meaning given that term in section 101(a)(16)
8 of title 10, United States Code.

9 (2) DEPENDENT.—The term “dependent” has
10 the meaning given that term in section 1072 of title
11 10, United States Code.

12 (3) ELIGIBLE MEMBER.—The term “eligible
13 member” means a member of the Armed Forces
14 who—

15 (A) is pregnant; or

16 (B) is not more than 1 year postpartum.

17 (4) PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION.—

18 The term “perinatal mental health condition” means
19 a mental health disorder that onsets during the
20 pregnancy or within the one-year postpartum period.

21 (5) PILOT PROGRAM.—The term “pilot pro-
22 gram” means the pilot program established under
23 section 2(a).

24 (6) PREVENTION PROGRAM.—The term “pre-
25 vention program” means a program or activity that

1 averts or decreases the onset or symptoms of a
2 perinatal mental health condition.

3 (7) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
4 the Secretary of Defense.

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