

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 8108

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to develop clinical practice guidelines for the treatment of serious mental illnesses.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

AUGUST 25, 2020

Mr. MALINOWSKI (for himself and Mr. DUNN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and in addition to the Committees on Energy and Commerce, and Armed Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to develop clinical practice guidelines for the treatment of serious mental illnesses.

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 “VA Serious Mental
5 Illness Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT BY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS**
2 **AFFAIRS AND DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE OF**
3 **CLINICAL PRACTICE GUIDELINES FOR THE**
4 **TREATMENT OF SERIOUS MENTAL ILLNESS.**

5 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than three years after
6 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of
7 Veterans Affairs, in consultation with the Secretary of De-
8 fense and the Secretary of Health and Human Services,
9 shall complete the development of a clinical practice guide-
10 line or guidelines for the treatment of serious mental ill-
11 ness, to include the following conditions:

12 (1) Schizophrenia.

13 (2) Schizoaffective disorder.

14 (3) Persistent mood disorder, including bipolar
15 disorder I and II.

16 (4) Any other mental, behavioral, or emotional
17 disorder resulting in serious functional impairment
18 that substantially interferes with major life activities
19 as the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in consultation
20 with the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of
21 Health and Human Services, considers appropriate.

22 (b) MATTERS INCLUDED IN GUIDELINES.—The clin-
23 ical practice guideline or guidelines developed under sub-
24 section (a) shall include the following:

25 (1) Guidance contained in the 2016 Clinical
26 Practice Guidelines for the Management of Major

1 Depressive Disorders of the Department of Veterans
2 Affairs and the Department of Defense.

3 (2) Guidance with respect to the treatment of
4 patients with a condition described in subsection (a).

5 (3) A list of evidence-based therapies for the
6 treatment of conditions described in subsection (a).

7 (4) An appropriate guideline for the administra-
8 tion of pharmacological therapy, psychological or be-
9 havioral therapy, or other therapy for the manage-
10 ment of conditions described in subsection (a).

11 (c) PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND DISSEMINA-
12 TION.—The Secretary shall carry out an explicit plan to
13 implement and disseminate the clinical practice guideline
14 or guidelines developed under subsection (a).

15 (d) ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING GUIDELINES.—Not
16 later than two years after the date of the enactment of
17 this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in consultation
18 with the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Health
19 and Human Services, shall complete an assessment of the
20 2016 Clinical Practice Guidelines for the Management of
21 Major Depressive Disorders to determine whether an up-
22 date to such guidelines is necessary.

23 (e) WORK GROUP.—

24 (1) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of Vet-
25 erans Affairs, the Secretary of Defense, and the Sec-

1 retary of Health and Human Services shall create a
2 work group to develop the clinical practice guideline
3 or guidelines under subsection (a) to be known as
4 the “Serious Mental Illness Work Group” (in this
5 subsection referred to as the “Work Group”).

6 (2) MEMBERSHIP.—The Work Group created
7 under paragraph (1) shall be comprised of individ-
8 uals that represent Federal Government entities and
9 non-Federal Government entities with expertise in
10 the areas covered by the Work Group, including the
11 following entities:

12 (A) Academic institutions that specialize in
13 research for the treatment of conditions de-
14 scribed in subsection (a).

15 (B) The Health Services Research and De-
16 velopment Service of the Department of Vet-
17 erans Affairs.

18 (C) The Office of the Assistant Secretary
19 for Mental Health and Substance Use of the
20 Department of Health and Human Services.

21 (D) The National Institute of Mental
22 Health.

23 (E) The Indian Health Service.

1 (F) Relevant organizations with expertise
2 in researching, diagnosing, or treating condi-
3 tions described in subsection (a).

4 (3) RELATION TO OTHER WORK GROUPS.—The
5 Work Group shall be created and conducted in the
6 same manner as other work groups for the develop-
7 ment of clinical practice guidelines for the Depart-
8 ment of Veterans Affairs and the Department of De-
9 fense.

10 (f) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this sec-
11 tion shall be construed to prevent the Secretary of Vet-
12 erans Affairs and the Secretary of Defense from consid-
13 ering all relevant evidence, as appropriate, in creating the
14 clinical practice guideline or guidelines required under
15 subsection (a) or from ensuring that the final clinical prac-
16 tice guideline or guidelines developed under such sub-
17 section and subsequently updated, as appropriate, remain
18 applicable to the patient populations of the Department
19 of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense.

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