

113TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. 1411

To specify requirements for the next update of the current strategic plan for the Office of Rural Health of the Department of Veterans Affairs for improving access to, and the quality of, health care services for veterans in rural areas.

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 31, 2013

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

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## A BILL

To specify requirements for the next update of the current strategic plan for the Office of Rural Health of the Department of Veterans Affairs for improving access to, and the quality of, health care services for veterans in rural areas.

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 “Rural Veterans Health  
5 Care Improvement Act of 2013”.

1 **SEC. 2. REQUIREMENTS IN CONNECTION WITH NEXT UP-**  
2 **DATE OF CURRENT STRATEGIC PLAN FOR OF-**  
3 **FICE OF RURAL HEALTH OF THE DEPART-**  
4 **MENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

5 (a) REQUIREMENTS.—

6 (1) IN GENERAL.—The first update of the Stra-  
7 tegic Plan Refresh for Fiscal Years 2012 through  
8 2014 of the Office of Rural Health of the Depart-  
9 ment of Veterans Affairs after the date of the enact-  
10 ment of this Act, whether an update or refresh of  
11 such Strategic Plan Refresh or a strategic plan to  
12 supersede such Strategic Plan Refresh, shall be pre-  
13 pared in accordance with this section.

14 (2) CONSULTATION.—The Director of the Of-  
15 fice of Rural Health shall prepare the update in con-  
16 sultation with the following:

17 (A) The Director of the Health Care Re-  
18 tention and Recruitment Office of the Depart-  
19 ment.

20 (B) The Director of the Office of Quality  
21 and Performance of the Department.

22 (C) The Director of the Office of Care Co-  
23 ordination Services of the Department.

24 (b) ELEMENTS.—The update described in subsection  
25 (a) shall include, for the period covered by the update,  
26 the following:

1           (1) Goals and objectives for the recruitment  
2           and retention by the Veterans Health Administra-  
3           tion of health care personnel in rural areas.

4           (2) Goals and objectives for ensuring timeliness  
5           and improving quality in the delivery of health care  
6           services by the Veterans Health Administration in  
7           rural areas through contract and fee-basis providers.

8           (3) Goals and objectives for the implementation,  
9           expansion, and enhanced use of telemedicine services  
10          by the Veterans Health Administration in rural  
11          areas, including through coordination with other ap-  
12          propriate offices of the Department.

13          (4) Goals and objectives for ensuring the full  
14          and effective use of mobile outpatient clinics by the  
15          Veterans Health Administration for the provision of  
16          health care services in rural areas, including goals  
17          and objectives for the use of such clinics on a fully  
18          mobile basis and for encouraging health care pro-  
19          viders who provide services through such clinics to  
20          do so in rural areas.

21          (5) Procedures for soliciting from each Vet-  
22          erans Health Administration facility that serves a  
23          rural area the following:

24                  (A) A statement of the clinical capacity of  
25                  such facility.

1           (B) The procedures of such facility in the  
2           event of a medical, surgical, or mental health  
3           emergency outside the scope of the clinical ca-  
4           pacity of such facility.

5           (C) The procedures and mechanisms of  
6           such facility for the provision and coordination  
7           of health care for women veterans, including  
8           procedures and mechanisms for coordination  
9           with local hospitals and health care facilities,  
10          oversight of primary care and fee-basis care,  
11          and management of specialty care.

12          (6) Goals and objectives for the modification of  
13          the funding allocation mechanisms of the Office of  
14          Rural Health in order to ensure that the Office dis-  
15          tributes funds to components of the Department to  
16          best achieve the goals and objectives of the Office  
17          and in a timely manner.

18          (7) Goals and objectives for the coordination of,  
19          and sharing of resources with respect to, the provi-  
20          sion of health care services to veterans in rural areas  
21          between the Department of Veterans Affairs, the  
22          Department of Defense, the Indian Health Service  
23          of the Department of Health and Human Services,  
24          and other Federal agencies, as appropriate and pru-  
25          dent.

1           (8) Specific milestones for the achievement of  
2           the goals and objectives developed for the update.

3           (9) Procedures for ensuring the effective imple-  
4           mentation of the update.

5           (c) TRANSMITTAL TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 90  
6           days after the date of the issuance of the update described  
7           in subsection (a), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall  
8           transmit the update to Congress, together with such com-  
9           ments and recommendations in connection with the update  
10          as the Secretary considers appropriate.

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