

113TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

S. 2311

To amend title 38, United States Code, to include licensed hearing aid specialists as eligible for appointment in the Veterans Health Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 8, 2014

Mr. TESTER (for himself, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, Mr. BEGICH, and Mr. WALSH) 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 include licensed hearing aid specialists as eligible for appointment in the Veterans Health Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs, 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. APPOINTMENT OF LICENSED HEARING AID**
4 **SPECIALISTS IN VETERANS HEALTH ADMIN-**
5 **ISTRATION.**

6 (a) LICENSED HEARING AID SPECIALISTS.—

7 (1) APPOINTMENT.—Section 7401(3) of title
8 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting “li-

1 censed hearing aid specialists,” after “Audiol-
2 ogists,”.

3 (2) QUALIFICATIONS.—Section 7402(b)(14) of
4 such title is amended by inserting “licensed hearing
5 aid specialist,” after “licensed physical therapist,”.

6 (b) ANNUAL REPORT.—

7 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year
8 after the date of the enactment of this Act, and each
9 year thereafter, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs
10 shall submit to Congress a report on the following:

11 (A) Timely access of veterans to hearing
12 health services through the Department of Vet-
13 erans Affairs.

14 (B) Contracting policies of the Department
15 with respect to providing hearing health serv-
16 ices to veterans in facilities that are not facili-
17 ties of the Department.

18 (2) TIMELY ACCESS TO SERVICES.—Each re-
19 port shall, with respect to the matter specified in
20 paragraph (1)(A) for the one-year period preceding
21 the submittal of such report, include the following:

22 (A) The staffing levels of audiologists,
23 hearing aid specialists, and health technicians
24 in audiology in the Veterans Health Adminis-
25 tration.

1 (B) A description of the metrics used by
2 the Secretary in measuring performance with
3 respect to appointments and care relating to
4 hearing health.

5 (C) The average time that a veteran waits
6 to receive an appointment, beginning on the
7 date on which the veteran makes the request,
8 for the following:

9 (i) A disability rating evaluation for a
10 hearing-related disability.

11 (ii) A hearing aid evaluation.

12 (iii) Dispensing of hearing aids.

13 (iv) Any follow-up hearing health ap-
14 pointment.

15 (D) The percentage of veterans whose total
16 wait time for appointments described in sub-
17 paragraph (C), including an initial and follow-
18 up appointment, if applicable, is—

19 (i) less than 15 days;

20 (ii) between 15 days and 28 days;

21 (iii) between 29 days and 42 days;

22 (iv) between 43 days and 56 days; or

23 (v) more than 56 days.

24 (3) CONTRACTING POLICIES.—Each report
25 shall, with respect to the matter specified in para-

1 graph (1)(B) for the one-year period preceding the
2 submittal of such report, include the following:

3 (A) The number of veterans that the Sec-
4 retary refers to non-Department audiologists
5 for hearing health care appointments.

6 (B) Of the veterans described in subpara-
7 graph (A), the number of veterans that the Sec-
8 retary refers to non-Department hearing aid
9 specialists for follow-up appointments for a
10 hearing aid evaluation, the dispensing of hear-
11 ing aids, or any other purpose relating to hear-
12 ing health.

13 (C) The policies of the Veterans Health
14 Administration regarding the referral of vet-
15 erans to non-Department hearing aid specialists
16 and a description of the manner in which such
17 policies will be applied under the Patient-Cen-
18 tered Community Care program of the Depart-
19 ment.

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