

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 3598

To require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a comprehensive standard for timing between referrals and appointments for care from the Department of Veterans Affairs and to submit a report with respect to that standard, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JANUARY 17, 2024

Mr. SCOTT of Florida (for himself, Mr. OSSOFF, and Mr. CRUZ) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a comprehensive standard for timing between referrals and appointments for care from the Department of Veterans Affairs and to submit a report with respect to that standard, 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 “Scheduling for Com-
5 munity Health and Easy Data to Understand for Legisla-
6 tors to Evaluate Services Act of 2024” or the “SCHED-
7 ULES Act of 2024”.

1 **SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE STANDARD**
2 **FOR TIMING BETWEEN REFERRAL AND AP-**
3 **POINTMENT FOR CARE FROM DEPARTMENT**
4 **OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

5 (a) ESTABLISHMENT OF STANDARD.—

6 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans
7 Affairs shall establish a comprehensive standard for
8 timing between the date on which a referral for care
9 for a veteran under the laws administered by the
10 Secretary is entered into the care coordination sys-
11 tem of the Department of Veterans Affairs and the
12 date on which an appointment for care for the vet-
13 eran occurs, whether at a facility of the Department
14 or through care in the community.

15 (2) MODIFICATION.—The Secretary may modify
16 the standard established under paragraph (1) as the
17 appointment scheduling processes of the Department
18 for care at a facility of the Department or through
19 care in the community are updated.

20 (3) PUBLICATION.—Not later than 30 days be-
21 fore establishing under paragraph (1) or modifying
22 under paragraph (2) the comprehensive standard re-
23 quired under this subsection, the Secretary shall
24 publish such standard in the Federal Register and
25 on a publicly available internet website of the De-
26 partment.

1 (b) REPORT.—

2 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not less frequently than
3 quarterly, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a
4 report on the number and percentage of referrals
5 from the Department to facilities of the Department
6 or providers in the community that meet the stand-
7 ard under subsection (a).

8 (2) ELEMENTS.—Each report submitted under
9 paragraph (1) shall include the following:

10 (A) The number and percentage of total
11 referrals from each facility of the Department
12 that meet, for the quarter covered by the re-
13 port—

14 (i) the standard under subsection (a);

15 (ii) with respect to referrals to a facil-
16 ity of the Department, the three-business-
17 day standard for scheduling an appoint-
18 ment at a facility of the Department; and

19 (iii) with respect to referrals for care
20 in the community, the seven-calendar-day
21 standard for scheduling an appointment
22 for care in the community.

23 (B) The number and percentage of refer-
24 rals from each facility of the Department that
25 meet each of the standards specified in sub-

1 paragraph (A), disaggregated by each of the
2 five, or more, most in-demand categories of care
3 provided at such facility (such as mental health,
4 cardiology, neurology, oncology, etc.).

5 (C) A list of all medical centers of the De-
6 partment ranked from best to worst in meeting
7 the standard under subsection (a), including a
8 disaggregated list by State.

9 (3) ANNUALLY INCLUDED INFORMATION.—Not
10 less frequently than annually, the Secretary shall in-
11 clude in the report required under paragraph (1)—

12 (A) aggregated data for the four-quarter
13 period preceding the date of the report;

14 (B) a description of steps taken by the De-
15 partment to improve the timeliness of the provi-
16 sion of care by the Department and an estimate
17 of when the Department will be fully compliant
18 with the standard under subsection (a).

19 (4) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—The Secretary
20 shall make each report required under paragraph (1)
21 publicly available on a website of the Veterans
22 Health Administration.

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