

114TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 715

To improve the provision of mental health care to members of the Armed Forces and veterans from the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 11, 2015

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

A BILL

To improve the provision of mental health care to members of the Armed Forces and veterans from the Department of Defense and 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. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Military and Veterans
5 Mental Health Provider Assessment Act of 2015”.

1 **SEC. 2. IMPROVEMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH CARE PRO-**
2 **VIDED BY HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS OF THE**
3 **DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AND THE DE-**
4 **PARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

5 (a) TRAINING ON RECOGNITION AND MANAGEMENT
6 OF RISK OF SUICIDE.—The Secretary concerned shall en-
7 sure that all health care providers under the jurisdiction
8 of such Secretary receive empirically supported training
9 on the recognition and assessment of individuals at risk
10 for suicide and the management of such risk not less fre-
11 quently than once every three years.

12 (b) EVALUATION OF IMPLEMENTATION OF CLINICAL
13 PRACTICE GUIDELINES AND BEST PRACTICES BY MEN-
14 TAL HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS.—

15 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year
16 after the date of the enactment of this Act, and not
17 less frequently than once each year thereafter, the
18 Secretary concerned shall conduct an evaluation of
19 the implementation by mental health care providers
20 under the jurisdiction of such Secretary of the clin-
21 ical practice guidelines recommended for such pro-
22 viders by such Secretary and other evidence-based
23 treatments and approaches.

24 (2) INCLUSION OF RESULTS IN EMPLOYEE PER-
25 FORMANCE EVALUATIONS.—The Secretary con-
26 cerned shall incorporate evaluations conducted under

1 paragraph (1) into the employee evaluation process
2 conducted by such Secretary with respect to mental
3 health care providers to the greatest extent possible.

4 (c) ASSESSMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH WORK-
5 FORCE.—

6 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year
7 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-
8 retary of Defense and the Secretary of Veterans Af-
9 fairs shall jointly submit to the appropriate commit-
10 tees of Congress a report assessing the mental
11 health workforce of the Department of Defense and
12 the Department of Veterans Affairs and the long-
13 term mental health care needs of members of the
14 Armed Forces and veterans for purposes of deter-
15 mining the long-term need of the Department of De-
16 fense and the Department of Veterans Affairs for
17 mental health care providers.

18 (2) ELEMENTS.—The report submitted under
19 paragraph (1) shall include an assessment of the fol-
20 lowing:

21 (A) The number of mental health care pro-
22 viders of the Department of Defense and the
23 Department of Veterans Affairs as of the date
24 of the submittal of the report, disaggregated by
25 specialty, including psychiatrists, psychologists,

1 social workers, mental health counselors, and
2 marriage and family therapists.

3 (B) The number of mental health care pro-
4 viders that are anticipated to be needed by the
5 Department of Defense and the Department of
6 Veterans Affairs.

7 (C) The types of mental health care pro-
8 viders that are anticipated to be needed by the
9 Department of Defense and the Department of
10 Veterans Affairs.

11 (D) Locations in which mental health care
12 providers are anticipated to be needed by the
13 Department of Defense and the Department of
14 Veterans Affairs.

15 (d) PLAN FOR DEVELOPMENT OF PROCEDURES TO
16 MEASURE MENTAL HEALTH DATA.—Not later than 180
17 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-
18 retary of Defense and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs
19 shall jointly submit to the appropriate committees of Con-
20 gress a plan for the Department of Defense and the De-
21 partment of Veterans Affairs to jointly develop procedures
22 to compile and assess data relating to the following:

23 (1) Outcomes for mental health care provided
24 by the Department of Defense and the Department
25 of Veterans Affairs.

1 (2) Variations in such outcomes among dif-
2 ferent medical facilities of the Department of De-
3 fense and Department of Veterans Affairs.

4 (3) Barriers, if any, to the implementation by
5 mental health care providers under the jurisdiction
6 of the Secretary concerned of the clinical practice
7 guidelines recommended for such providers by such
8 Secretary and other evidence-based treatments and
9 approaches.

10 (e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

11 (1) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CON-
12 GRESS.—The term “appropriate committees of Con-
13 gress” means—

14 (A) the Committee on Armed Services and
15 the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the Sen-
16 ate; and

17 (B) the Committee on Armed Services and
18 the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the
19 House of Representatives.

20 (2) SECRETARY CONCERNED.—The term “Sec-
21 retary concerned” means—

22 (A) the Secretary of Defense with respect
23 to matters concerning the Department of De-
24 fense; and

1 (B) the Secretary of Veterans Affairs with
2 respect to matters concerning the Department
3 of Veterans Affairs.

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