

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 606

To improve oversight and evaluation of the mental health and suicide prevention media outreach campaigns of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 28, 2019

Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. SULLIVAN, Ms. HIRONO, and Mr. BROWN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To improve oversight and evaluation of the mental health and suicide prevention media outreach campaigns 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. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Reach Every Veteran
5 in Crisis Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. EVALUATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS**

7 **AFFAIRS MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PRE-**
8 **VENTION MEDIA OUTREACH CAMPAIGNS.**

9 (a) ESTABLISHMENT OF TARGETS.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans
2 Affairs shall establish targets to evaluate the effec-
3 tiveness of the mental health and suicide prevention
4 media outreach campaigns of the Department of
5 Veterans Affairs in raising awareness about mental
6 health and suicide prevention.

7 (2) USE OF METRICS.—

8 (A) IN GENERAL.—The targets established
9 under paragraph (1) shall be based on metrics
10 specific to different media types as follows:

11 (i) Metrics relating to social media
12 shall include the following:

13 (I) Impressions.

14 (II) Reach.

15 (III) Engagement rate.

16 (IV) Such other metrics as the
17 Secretary considers necessary.

18 (ii) Metrics relating to television shall
19 include the following:

20 (I) Nielsen ratings.

21 (II) Such other metrics as the
22 Secretary considers necessary.

23 (iii) Metrics relating to email shall in-
24 clude the following:

25 (I) Open rate.

1 (II) Response rate.

2 (III) Click rate.

3 (IV) Such other metrics as the
4 Secretary considers necessary.

5 (B) PERIODIC UPDATES.—The Secretary
6 shall periodically update the metrics under sub-
7 paragraph (A) as more accurate metrics become
8 available.

9 (3) CONSULTATION.—In establishing the tar-
10 gets under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall con-
11 sult with the following:

12 (A) Relevant stakeholders as determined
13 by the Secretary.

14 (B) Mental health and suicide prevention
15 experts.

16 (C) Such other persons as the Secretary
17 considers appropriate.

18 (b) REPORTS ON OUTREACH TARGETS AND
19 METRICS.—

20 (1) REPORT ON TARGETS AND METRICS.—Not
21 later than 180 days after the date of the enactment
22 of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Com-
23 mittee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the
24 Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of
25 Representatives a report detailing the targets estab-

lished under subsection (a)(1) to evaluate the effectiveness of the mental health and suicide prevention media outreach campaigns of the Department in raising awareness about mental health and suicide prevention, including the metrics on which such targets are based under subsection (a)(2).

(2) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than one year after the submittal of the report under paragraph (1), and annually thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives a report detailing—

(A) the progress of the Department in meeting the targets established under subsection (a)(1); and

(B) a description of any action to be taken by the Department to modify mental health and suicide prevention media outreach campaigns if those targets are not being met.

SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF OVERSIGHT PROCESS FOR DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION MEDIA OUTREACH CAMPAIGNS.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT OF OVERSIGHT PROCESS.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this

1 Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish a
 2 process to oversee the mental health and suicide preven-
 3 tion media outreach campaigns of the Department of Vet-
 4 erans Affairs.

5 (b) COMPONENTS OF OVERSIGHT PROCESS.—The
 6 process established under subsection (a) shall include a de-
 7 lineation of the roles and responsibilities of officials in
 8 leadership and contract oversight positions within the Of-
 9 fice of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention of the Vet-
 10 erans Health Administration, including during periods of
 11 staff turnover or program changes.

12 **SEC. 4. REPORT ON EXPENDITURES AND OBLIGATIONS OF**
 13 **FUNDS OF THE OFFICE OF MENTAL HEALTH**
 14 **AND SUICIDE PREVENTION.**

15 (a) REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than 180 days
 16 after the date of the enactment of this Act, and semiannu-
 17 ally thereafter, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall sub-
 18 mit to the appropriate congressional committees a report
 19 detailing the expenditures of and obligations of funds by
 20 the Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention of the
 21 Veterans Health Administration during the period covered
 22 by the report.

23 (b) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—
 24 In this section, the term “appropriate congressional com-
 25 mittees” means—

1 (1) the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the
2 Committee on Appropriations of the Senate; and

3 (2) the Committee on Veterans Affairs and the
4 Committee on Appropriations of the House of Rep-
5 resentatives.

6 **SEC. 5. CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS.**

7 The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall ensure that
8 each contract into which the Secretary enters to develop
9 mental health and suicide prevention outreach media in-
10 cludes a requirement that the contractor—

11 (1) track metrics used by the Secretary under
12 section 2(a)(2); and

13 (2) not less frequently than quarterly, report
14 such metrics to the Office of Mental Health and Sui-
15 cide Prevention of the Veterans Health Administra-
16 tion.

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