

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1848

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program on the use of medical scribes in Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 3, 2017

Mr. ROE of Tennessee (for himself, Mr. WALDEN, and Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program on the use of medical scribes in Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers.

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 “Veterans Affairs Med-
5 ical Scribe Pilot Act of 2017”.

6 **SEC. 2. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL**
7 **SCRIBE PILOT PROGRAM.**

8 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs
9 shall carry out a two-year pilot program under which the

1 Secretary shall increase the use of medical scribes at De-
2 partment of Veterans Affairs medical centers.

3 (b) LOCATIONS.—The Secretary shall carry out the
4 pilot program at the 10 medical centers of the Department
5 as follows:

6 (1) At least four such medical centers located
7 in rural areas.

8 (2) At least four such medical centers located
9 in urban areas.

10 (3) Two such medical centers located in areas
11 with need for increased access or increased effi-
12 ciency, as determine by the Secretary.

13 (c) MEDICAL SCRIBES.—

14 (1) HIRING.—Under the pilot program the Sec-
15 retary shall—

16 (A) hire 20 new Department of Veterans
17 Affairs term employees as medical scribes; and

18 (B) seek to enter into contracts with ap-
19 propriate entities for the employment of 20 ad-
20 ditional medical scribes.

21 (2) DISTRIBUTION.—The Secretary shall assign
22 four medical scribes to each of the 10 medical cen-
23 ters of the Department where the Secretary carries
24 out the pilot program as follows:

1 (A) Two scribes shall be assigned to each
2 of two physicians.

3 (B) Thirty percent of the scribes shall be
4 employed in the provision of emergency care.

5 (C) Seventy percent of the scribes shall be
6 employed in the provision of speciality care in
7 specialties with the longest patient wait times
8 or lowest efficiency ratings, as determined by
9 the Secretary.

10 (d) REPORTS.—

11 (1) REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—Not later than
12 180 days after the commencement of the pilot pro-
13 gram required under this section, and every 180
14 days thereafter for the duration of the pilot pro-
15 gram, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit
16 to Congress a report on the pilot program. Each
17 such report shall include each of the following:

18 (A) A separate analysis of each the fol-
19 lowing with respect to medical scribes employed
20 by the Department of Veterans Affairs and
21 medical scribes performing Department of Vet-
22 erans Affairs functions under a contract:

23 (i) Provider efficiency.

24 (ii) Patient satisfaction.

25 (iii) Average wait time.

1 (iv) The number of patients seen per
2 day by each physician or practitioner.

3 (v) The amount of time required to
4 hire and train an employee to perform
5 medical scribe functions under the pilot
6 program.

7 (B) Metrics and data for analyzing the ef-
8 fects of the pilot program, including an evalua-
9 tion of the each of the elements under clauses
10 (i) through (iv) of subparagraph (A) at medical
11 centers who employed scribes under the pilot
12 program for an appropriate period preceding
13 the hiring of such scribes.

14 (2) COMPTROLLER GENERAL REPORT.—Not
15 later than 90 days after the termination of the pilot
16 program under this section, the Comptroller General
17 of the United States shall submit to Congress a re-
18 port on the pilot program. Such report shall include
19 a comparison of the pilot program with similar pro-
20 grams carried out in the private sector.

21 (e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

22 (1) The term “medical scribe” means an unli-
23 censed individual hired to enter information into the
24 electronic health record or chart at the direction of

1 a physician or licensed independent practitioner
2 whose responsibilities include the following:

3 (A) Assisting the physician or practitioner
4 in navigating the electronic health record.

5 (B) Responding to various messages as di-
6 rected by the physician or practitioner.

7 (C) Entering information into the elec-
8 tronic health record, as directed by the physi-
9 cian or practitioner.

10 (2) The terms “urban” and “rural” have the
11 meanings given such terms under the rural-urban
12 commuting codes developed by the Secretary of Agri-
13 culture and the Secretary of Health and Human
14 Services.

15 (f) FUNDING.—The pilot program under this section
16 shall be carried out using amounts otherwise authorized
17 to be appropriated for the Department of Veterans Af-
18 fairs. No additional amounts are authorized to be appro-
19 priated to carry out such program.

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