

116TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 2982

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to conduct a study of the barriers for women veterans to health care from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 23, 2019

Mr. CUNNINGHAM (for himself and Mrs. MURPHY) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

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## A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to conduct a study of the barriers for women veterans to health care from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

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 “Women Veterans  
5       Health Care Accountability Act”.

6       **SEC. 2. STUDY OF BARRIERS FOR WOMEN VETERANS TO**  
7                       **HEALTH CARE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF**  
8                       **VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

9       (a) STUDY REQUIRED.—The Secretary of Veterans  
10       Affairs shall conduct a comprehensive study of the bar-

riers to the provision of comprehensive health care by the  
Department of Veterans Affairs encountered by women  
who are veterans. In conducting the study, the Secretary  
shall—

(1) survey women veterans who seek or receive  
hospital care or medical services provided by the De-  
partment of Veterans Affairs as well as women vet-  
erans who do not seek or receive such care or serv-  
ices;

(2) administer the survey to a representative  
sample of women veterans from each Veterans Inte-  
grated Service Network; and

(3) ensure that the sample of women veterans  
surveyed is of sufficient size for the study results to  
be statistically significant and is a larger sample  
than that of the study referred to in subsection  
(b)(1).

(b) USE OF PREVIOUS STUDIES.—In conducting the  
study required by subsection (a), the Secretary shall build  
on the work of the studies of the Department of Veterans  
Affairs titled—

(1) “National Survey of Women Veterans in  
Fiscal Year 2007–2008”; and

(2) “Study of Barriers for Women Veterans to  
VA Health Care 2015”.

1       (c) ELEMENTS OF STUDY.—In conducting the study  
2 required by subsection (a), the Secretary shall conduct re-  
3 search on the effects of the following on the women vet-  
4 erans surveyed in the study:

5           (1) The perceived stigma associated with seek-  
6 ing mental health care services.

7           (2) The effect of driving distance or availability  
8 of other forms of transportation to the nearest med-  
9 ical facility on access to care.

10          (3) The availability of child care.

11          (4) The acceptability of integrated primary  
12 care, women’s health clinics, or both.

13          (5) The comprehension of eligibility require-  
14 ments for, and the scope of services available under,  
15 hospital care and medical services.

16          (6) The perception of personal safety and com-  
17 fort in inpatient, outpatient, and behavioral health  
18 facilities.

19          (7) The gender sensitivity of health care pro-  
20 viders and staff to issues that particularly affect  
21 women.

22          (8) The effectiveness of outreach for health care  
23 services available to women veterans.

1           (9) The location and operating hours of health  
2       care facilities that provide services to women vet-  
3       erans.

4           (10) Such other significant barriers as the Sec-  
5       retary considers appropriate.

6       (d) DISCHARGE BY CONTRACT.—The Secretary shall  
7       enter into a contract with a qualified independent entity  
8       or organization to carry out the study and research re-  
9       quired under this section.

10       (e) MANDATORY REVIEW OF DATA BY CERTAIN DE-  
11       PARTMENT DIVISIONS.—

12           (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall ensure  
13       that the head of each division of the Department of  
14       Veterans Affairs specified in paragraph (2) reviews  
15       the results of the study conducted under this sec-  
16       tion. The head of each such division shall submit  
17       findings with respect to the study to the Under Sec-  
18       retary for responsibilities relating to health care  
19       services for women veterans.

20           (2) SPECIFIED DIVISIONS.—The divisions of the  
21       Department of Veterans Affairs specified in this  
22       paragraph are the following:

23           (A) The Center for Women Veterans estab-  
24       lished under section 318 of title 38, United  
25       States Code.

1                   (B) The Advisory Committee on Women  
2                   Veterans established under section 542 of such  
3                   title.

4           (f) REPORT.—Not later than 30 months after the  
5   date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall sub-  
6   mit to Congress a report on the study required under this  
7   section. The report shall include recommendations for  
8   such administrative and legislative action as the Secretary  
9   considers appropriate. The report shall also include the  
10   findings of the head of each division of the Department  
11   specified under subsection (e)(2) and of the Under Sec-  
12   retary for Health.

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