

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 8144

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress a plan to address staffing of mental health providers of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 1, 2020

Mrs. HAYES (for herself, Mr. STEUBE, Mr. RYAN, Mr. MORELLE, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. RUSH, Mr. CLEAVER, Ms. FUDGE, Mr. ROUDA, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Ms. WILD, Mr. O'HALLERAN, Mr. HIMES, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. SOTO, and Mr. CÁRDENAS) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress a plan to address staffing of mental health providers 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 “VA Mental Health
5 Staffing Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. STAFFING IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR MENTAL**
2 **HEALTH PROVIDERS OF DEPARTMENT OF**
3 **VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the
5 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Vet-
6 erans Affairs, in consultation with the Inspector General
7 of the Department of Veterans Affairs, shall submit to the
8 Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the
9 Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Rep-
10 resentatives a plan to address staffing of mental health
11 providers of the Department of Veterans Affairs, including
12 filling any open positions.

13 (b) ELEMENTS.—The plan required by subsection (a)
14 shall include the following:

15 (1) An estimate of the number of positions for
16 mental health providers of the Department that need
17 to be filled to meet demand.

18 (2) An identification of the steps that the Sec-
19 retary will take to address mental health staffing for
20 the Department.

21 (3) A description of any region-specific hiring
22 incentives to be used by the Secretary in consulta-
23 tion with the directors of Veterans Integrated Serv-
24 ice Networks and medical centers of the Depart-
25 ment.

1 (4) A description of any local retention or en-
2 gagement incentives to be used by directors of Vet-
3 erans Integrated Service Networks.

4 (5) Such recommendations for legislative or ad-
5 ministrative action as the Secretary considers nec-
6 essary to aid in addressing mental health staffing
7 for the Department.

8 (c) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the sub-
9 mittal of the plan required by subsection (a), the Secretary
10 shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the
11 Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the
12 House of Representatives a report setting forth the num-
13 ber of mental health providers hired by the Department
14 during the one-year period preceding the submittal of the
15 report.

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