

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 804

To improve the provision of health care for women veterans by the
Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 3, 2017

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

A BILL

To improve the provision of health care for women veterans
by 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 “Women Veterans Ac-
5 cess to Quality Care Act of 2017”.

6 **SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF STRUCTURAL STANDARDS TO**

7 **MEET GENDER-SPECIFIC HEALTH CARE**

8 **NEEDS IN MEDICAL FACILITIES OF DEPART-**

9 **MENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

10 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans
2 Affairs shall establish standards to ensure that all
3 medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Af-
4 fairs have the structural characteristics necessary to
5 adequately meet the gender-specific health care
6 needs of veterans at such facilities, including pri-
7 vacy, safety, and dignity.

8 (2) REGULATIONS.—Not later than 180 days
9 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-
10 retary shall prescribe regulations to carry out para-
11 graph (1).

12 (b) INTEGRATION INTO PRIORITIZATION METHOD-
13 OLOGY.—Not later than 270 days after the date of the
14 enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall integrate the
15 standards established under subsection (a)(1) into the
16 prioritization methodology used by the Department under
17 paragraph (5) of section 8104(b) of title 38, United States
18 Code, with respect to requests for the funding of major
19 medical facility projects and major medical facility leases
20 under such section.

21 (c) REPORT.—Not later than 15 months after the
22 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall sub-
23 mit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate
24 and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of

1 Representatives a report on the standards established
2 under subsection (a)(1) that includes the following:

3 (1) A list of the medical facilities of the Depart-
4 ment that fail to meet such standards.

5 (2) The minimum total cost of the projects or
6 leases that would be required to ensure that all med-
7 ical facilities of the Department meet such stand-
8 ards.

9 (3) The number of such projects or leases that
10 qualify as a major medical facility project or major
11 medical facility lease under section 8104(a)(3).

12 (4) Where each such project or lease is located
13 in the current project prioritization of the Depart-
14 ment.

15 **SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF POLICIES FOR ENVIRONMENT**
16 **OF CARE INSPECTIONS AT MEDICAL CEN-**
17 **TERS OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AF-**
18 **FAIRS.**

19 Not later than 60 days after the date of the enact-
20 ment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall—

21 (1) establish policies for environment of care in-
22 spections at medical centers of the Department of
23 Veterans Affairs that include—

1 (A) an alignment of the requirements for
2 such inspections with the women's health hand-
3 book of the Veterans Health Administration;

4 (B) a requirement for the frequency of
5 such inspections; and

6 (C) a delineation of the roles and respon-
7 sibilities of staff at the medical center who are
8 responsible for compliance; and

9 (2) certify to the Committee on Veterans' Af-
10 fairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans'
11 Affairs of the House of Representatives that the
12 policies established under paragraph (1) have been
13 finalized and disseminated to medical centers of the
14 Department.

15 **SEC. 4. USE OF HEALTH OUTCOMES FOR WOMEN VET-**
16 **ERANS IN EVALUATING THE PERFORMANCE**
17 **OF DIRECTORS OF MEDICAL CENTERS OF DE-**
18 **PARTMENT AND DISCLOSURE OF HEALTH**
19 **OUTCOMES.**

20 (a) **EVALUATION OF DIRECTORS.**—The Secretary of
21 Veterans Affairs shall use health outcomes for women vet-
22 erans furnished hospital care, medical services, and other
23 health care by the Department of Veterans Affairs in eval-
24 uating the performance of directors of medical centers of
25 the Department.

1 (b) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—

2 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall publish
3 on a publicly available Internet website of the De-
4 partment information on the performance of direc-
5 tors of medical centers of the Department with re-
6 spect to health outcomes for women veterans.

7 (2) DATA ON HEALTH OUTCOMES.—The Sec-
8 retary shall publish on a publicly available Internet
9 website of each medical facility of the Department
10 the following:

11 (A) Data on health outcomes pursuant to
12 key health outcome metrics at such facility for
13 veterans who are women.

14 (B) A comparison of how such data com-
15 pares to data on health outcomes pursuant to
16 key health outcome metrics at such facility for
17 veterans who are men.

18 (C) Explanatory or clarifying information
19 necessary for members of the public to under-
20 stand the data under subparagraphs (A) and
21 (B).

1 **SEC. 5. INCREASE IN NUMBER OF OBSTETRICIAN-GYNE-**
2 **COLOGISTS OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS**
3 **AFFAIRS.**

4 (a) REQUIREMENT.—Not later than 18 months after
5 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of
6 Veterans Affairs shall ensure that every medical center of
7 the Department of Veterans Affairs has a full-time obste-
8 trician-gynecologist.

9 (b) PILOT PROGRAM ON INCREASE OF RESIDENCY
10 AND MEDICAL EDUCATION POSITIONS.—Not later than
11 two years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the
12 Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall carry out a pilot pro-
13 gram to increase the number of residency program posi-
14 tions and graduate medical education positions for obste-
15 trician-gynecologists at medical facilities of the Depart-
16 ment of Veterans Affairs in not fewer than three Veterans
17 Integrated Service Networks of the Department.

18 **SEC. 6. PROCEDURES FOR PROVISION OF CERTAIN INFOR-**
19 **MATION TO STATE VETERANS AGENCIES TO**
20 **FACILITATE THE FURNISHING OF ASSIST-**
21 **ANCE AND BENEFITS TO VETERANS.**

22 (a) PROCEDURES REQUIRED.—The Secretary of Vet-
23 erans Affairs shall develop procedures to share the infor-
24 mation described in subsection (b) regarding veterans with
25 State veterans agencies in electronic data format as a

1 means of facilitating the furnishing of assistance and ben-
2 efits to veterans.

3 (b) COVERED INFORMATION.—The information
4 shared with State veterans agencies under subsection (a)
5 regarding a veteran shall include the following:

6 (1) Military service and separation data.

7 (2) A personal email address.

8 (3) A personal telephone number.

9 (4) A mailing address.

10 (c) OPT-OUT ELECTION.—A veteran may elect to
11 prevent their information from being shared with State
12 veterans agencies under subsection (a) pursuant to a proc-
13 ess that the Secretary shall establish for purposes of this
14 subsection.

15 (d) USE OF INFORMATION.—The Secretary shall en-
16 sure that the information shared with State veterans agen-
17 cies in accordance with the procedures developed under
18 subsection (a) is only shared by such agencies with county
19 government veterans service offices for such purposes as
20 the Secretary shall specify for the administration and de-
21 livery of assistance and benefits.

1 **SEC. 7. EXAMINATION OF ABILITY OF MEDICAL CENTERS**
2 **OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO**
3 **MEET HEALTH CARE NEEDS OF WOMEN VET-**
4 **ERANS.**

5 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs
6 shall carry out an examination of whether the medical cen-
7 ters of the Department of Veterans Affairs are able to
8 meet the health care needs of women veterans.

9 (b) ELEMENTS.—The examination under subsection
10 (a) shall address, with respect to each medical center of
11 the Department, at a minimum, the following:

12 (1) The wait times for women veterans for ap-
13 pointments for the receipt of hospital care, medical
14 services, or other health care.

15 (2) Whether the medical center has a clinic that
16 specializes in the treatment of women.

17 (3) The number of full-time obstetrician-gyne-
18 cologists.

19 (4) The number of health professionals trained
20 in women's health.

21 (5) The extent to which the medical center con-
22 ducts regular—

23 (A) training on issues specific to women's
24 health; and

25 (B) sensitivity training.

1 (6) The differences in health outcomes between
2 men and women.

3 (7) The security and privacy measures used in
4 registration, clinical, and diagnostic areas.

5 (8) The availability of gender-specific equip-
6 ment or procedures.

7 (9) The extent to which the Center for Women
8 Veterans of the Department advises and engages
9 with the medical center with respect to providing
10 health care to women veterans.

11 (10) The extent to which the medical center im-
12 plements directives from the Center for Women Vet-
13 erans.

14 (11) The outreach conducted by the Depart-
15 ment to women veterans in the community served by
16 the medical center.

17 (12) The collaboration between the medical cen-
18 ter and non-Department entities, including veterans
19 service organizations, to meet the health care needs
20 of women veterans.

21 (13) The effectiveness of Patient Aligned Care
22 Teams in meeting the health care needs of women
23 veterans.

24 (c) REPORT.—Not later than 270 days after the date
25 of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans

1 Affairs shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs
2 of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of
3 the House of Representatives a report on the examination
4 carried out under subsection (a).

5 (d) VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATION DEFINED.—
6 In this section, the term “veterans service organization”
7 means an organization recognized by the Secretary for the
8 representation of veterans under section 5902 of title 38,
9 United States Code.

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