

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. _____

To require a study on the quality of care difference between mental health and addiction therapy care provided by health care providers of the Department of Veterans Affairs compared to non-Department providers, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. CORNYN (for himself and Ms. HASSAN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on

A BILL

To require a study on the quality of care difference between mental health and addiction therapy care provided by health care providers of the Department of Veterans Affairs compared to non-Department providers, 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 “Veterans Mental
5 Health and Addiction Therapy Quality of Care Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. STUDY ON QUALITY OF CARE DIFFERENCE BE-**
2 **TWEEN MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION**
3 **THERAPY CARE PROVIDED BY HEALTH CARE**
4 **PROVIDERS OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS**
5 **AFFAIRS COMPARED TO NON-DEPARTMENT**
6 **PROVIDERS.**

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the
8 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Vet-
9 erans Affairs shall seek to enter into an agreement with
10 an independent and objective organization outside the De-
11 partment of Veterans Affairs under which that organiza-
12 tion shall—

13 (1) conduct a study on the quality of care dif-
14 ference between mental health and addiction therapy
15 care under the laws administered by the Secretary
16 provided by health care providers of the Department
17 compared to non-Department providers across var-
18 ious modalities, such as telehealth, in-patient, inten-
19 sive out-patient, out-patient, and residential treat-
20 ment; and

21 (2) submit to the Committee on Veterans' Af-
22 fairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans'
23 Affairs of the House of Representatives and publish
24 on a publicly available website a report containing
25 the final results of such study.

1 (b) TIMING.—The Secretary shall ensure that the or-
2 ganization with which the Secretary enters into an agree-
3 ment pursuant to subsection (a) is able to complete the
4 requirements under such subsection by not later than 18
5 months after the date on which the agreement is entered
6 into.

7 (c) ELEMENTS.—The report submitted pursuant to
8 subsection (a)(2) shall include an assessment of the fol-
9 lowing:

10 (1) The amount of improvement in health out-
11 comes from start of treatment to completion, includ-
12 ing symptom scores and suicide risk using evidence-
13 based scales, including the Columbia-Suicide Sever-
14 ity Rating Scale.

15 (2) Whether providers of the Department and
16 non-Department providers are using evidence-based
17 practices in the treatment of mental health and ad-
18 diction therapy care, including criteria set forth by
19 the American Society of Addiction Medicine.

20 (3) Potential gaps in coordination between pro-
21 viders of the Department and non-Department pro-
22 viders in responding to individuals seeking mental
23 health or addiction therapy care, including the shar-
24 ing of patient health records.

1 (4) Implementation of veteran-centric care, in-
2 cluding the level of satisfaction of patients with care
3 and the competency of providers with the unique ex-
4 periences and needs of the military and veteran pop-
5 ulation.

6 (5) Whether veterans with co-occurring condi-
7 tions receive integrated care to holistically address
8 their needs.

9 (6) Whether providers monitor health outcomes
10 continually throughout treatment and at regular in-
11 tervals for up to three years after treatment.