

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1290

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program under which the Department of Veterans Affairs refers veterans experiencing mental health crises to approved non-Department mental health care providers, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 13, 2025

Mr. BUCHANAN (for himself and Mr. MURPHY) 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 under which the Department of Veterans Affairs refers veterans experiencing mental health crises to approved non-Department mental health care 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 Crisis Referral Enhancement Act of 2025”.

1 **SEC. 2. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PILOT PRO-**
2 **GRAM ON MENTAL HEALTH REFERRALS.**

3 (a) PILOT PROGRAM.—Beginning not later than 180
4 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-
5 retary of Veterans Affairs shall carry out a three-year pilot
6 program under which Vet Centers and medical facilities
7 of the Department provide veterans experiencing mental
8 health crises with referrals to non-Department mental
9 health care providers approved by the Secretary.

10 (b) LOCATIONS.—The Secretary shall select at least
11 three geographic locations at which to carry out the pilot
12 program required under subsection (a).

13 (c) REQUIREMENTS.—In carrying out the pilot pro-
14 gram under subsection (a), the Secretary shall—

15 (1) develop and maintain a referral system to
16 connect veterans experiencing mental health crises
17 with non-Department mental health care providers
18 within one week;

19 (2) develop criteria for the approval of non-De-
20 partment mental health care providers for purposes
21 of referrals under the program;

22 (3) hire any additional employees required to
23 facilitate referrals under the system; and

24 (4) provide appropriate training to employees of
25 Vet Centers and medical facilities of the Department
26 on the referral system.

1 (d) REPORTS.—

2 (1) ANNUAL REPORTS.—Not later than six
3 months after the last day of each year during which
4 the Secretary carries out the pilot program under
5 subsection (a), the Secretary shall submit to Con-
6 gress a report on the implementation and outcomes
7 of the pilot program. Each such report shall include
8 the following for the year covered by the report:

9 (A) The number of veterans referred to
10 non-Department mental health care providers
11 under the pilot program.

12 (B) The average wait time for a veteran to
13 receive mental health care after receiving a re-
14 ferral under the pilot program.

15 (C) An evaluation of veteran satisfaction
16 with the mental health care received through
17 the referral system.

18 (2) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than 180 days
19 after the conclusion of the pilot program, the Sec-
20 retary shall submit to Congress a final report con-
21 taining an evaluation of the effectiveness of the pro-
22 gram and the recommendations of the Secretary
23 with respect to expanding or modifying the referral
24 system developed under the program.

1 (e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
2 authorized to be appropriated to carry out the pilot pro-
3 gram required under subsection (a) \$3,000,000 for each
4 of fiscal years 2025 through 2027.

