

Calendar No. 274

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 654

To amend title 38, United States Code, to establish an external provider scheduling program to assist the Department of Veterans Affairs in scheduling appointments for care and services under the Veterans Community Care Program, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 20, 2025

Mr. MORAN (for himself, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. BOOZMAN, and Mr. BUDD) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

DECEMBER 2, 2025

Reported by Mr. MORAN, with an amendment

[Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the part printed in *italic*]

A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to establish an external provider scheduling program to assist the Department of Veterans Affairs in scheduling appointments for care and services under the Veterans Community Care Program, 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,*

1 **SECTION 1. EXTERNAL PROVIDER SCHEDULING PROGRAM**
 2 **OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

3 (a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—

4 (1) **IN GENERAL.**—Subchapter I of chapter 17
 5 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by in-
 6 serting after section 1703G the following new sec-
 7 tion:

8 **“§ 1703H. External Provider Scheduling Program**

9 “(a) **IN GENERAL.**—There is established within the
 10 Department a national External Provider Scheduling Pro-
 11 gram (in this section referred to as the ‘Program’) to as-
 12 sist the Department in scheduling appointments for care
 13 and services under the Veterans Community Care Pro-
 14 gram under section 1703 of this title.

15 “(b) **ELEMENTS OF PROGRAM.**—The Program shall
 16 consist of technology that allows schedulers of the Depart-
 17 ment to view the schedules of health care providers partici-
 18 pating in the Veterans Community Care Program under
 19 section 1703 of this title and schedule, in real-time, ap-
 20 pointments for care and services under such section.

21 “(c) **USE OF CONTRACTS.**—The Secretary shall carry
 22 out the Program through an existing contract entered into
 23 by the Department, if feasible, or a new contract.

24 “(d) **REDUCTION IN WAIT TIMES.**—The Secretary
 25 shall ensure that the Program—

1 “(1) reduces the time (measured in days) from
 2 referral of veterans to health care providers under
 3 the Veterans Community Care Program under sec-
 4 tion 1703 of this title to the actual scheduling of ap-
 5 pointments for care or services under such section;
 6 and

7 “(2) reduces the time (measured in days and
 8 hours) for schedulers of the Department to schedule
 9 appointments for care or services under such section.

10 “(c) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than September
 11 30 of each year through 2028, the Secretary shall submit
 12 to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and
 13 the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Rep-
 14 resentatives a report on the progress of the Secretary in
 15 establishing the Program.”.

16 (2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sec-
 17 tions at the beginning of chapter 17 of title 38,
 18 United States Code, is amended by inserting after
 19 the item relating to section 1703G the following new
 20 item:

“1703H. External Provider Scheduling Program.”.

21 (b) AVAILABILITY OF PROGRAM.—The Secretary of
 22 Veterans Affairs shall ensure that the national External
 23 Provider Scheduling Program established under section
 24 1703H of title 38, United States Code, as added by sub-
 25 section (a)(1), is available to all medical centers of the

1 Department of Veterans Affairs by not later than Sep-
 2 tember 30, 2025.

3 (c) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 1703 of
 4 title 38, United States Code, is amended—

5 (1) in subsection (a)(2)(A), by inserting “, in-
 6 cluding pursuant to the program under section
 7 1703H of this title,” after “medical appointments”;
 8 and

9 (2) in subsection (h)(2)(B), by inserting “, in-
 10 cluding pursuant to the program under section
 11 1703H of this title” before the period at the end.

12 **SECTION 1. EXTERNAL PROVIDER SCHEDULING PROGRAM**
 13 **OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

14 *Section 1703 of title 38, United States Code, is amend-*
 15 *ed—*

16 (1) *in subsection (a)(2)(A), by inserting “, in-*
 17 *cluding pursuant to the systems required under sub-*
 18 *section (q),” after “medical appointments”;*

19 (2) *in subsection (h)(2)(B), by inserting “, in-*
 20 *cluding pursuant to the systems required under sub-*
 21 *section (q)” before the period at the end;*

22 (3) *by redesignating subsection (q) as subsection*
 23 *(r); and*

24 (4) *by inserting after subsection (p) the following*
 25 *new subsection (q):*

1 “(q) *PROVIDER SCHEDULING.*—

2 “(1) *IN GENERAL.*—*In carrying out the program*
3 *under this section, the Secretary shall develop or pro-*
4 *cure such technology systems as needed to allow sched-*
5 *ulers of the Department to view the schedules of health*
6 *care providers participating in the program and*
7 *schedule, in real-time, appointments for care and*
8 *services under the program, to the extent practicable.*

9 “(2) *USE OF CONTRACTS.*—*The Secretary may*
10 *procure such systems as described in paragraph (1)*
11 *through an existing contract entered into by the De-*
12 *partment, if feasible, or a new contract.*

13 “(3) *REDUCTION IN WAIT TIMES.*—*The Secretary*
14 *shall develop or procure the systems described in*
15 *paragraph (1) with the intent of—*

16 “(A) *reducing the time (measured in days)*
17 *from referral date of veterans to health care pro-*
18 *viders under subsection (c) to the actual sched-*
19 *uling of appointments for care or services under*
20 *this section; and*

21 “(B) *reducing the time (measured in days*
22 *and hours) for schedulers of the Department to*
23 *schedule appointments for care or services under*
24 *this section.*

1 “(4) *ANNUAL REPORT*.—Not later than Sep-
2 *tember 30 of each year through 2028, the Secretary*
3 *shall submit to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of*
4 *the Senate and the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of*
5 *the House of Representatives a report on the progress*
6 *of the Secretary in establishing the systems required*
7 *by paragraph (1).”.*

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