

DANIEL J. HARVEY, JR. AND ADAM LAMBERT IMPROVING  
 SERVICEMEMBER TRANSITION TO REDUCE VETERAN  
 SUICIDE ACT

FEBRUARY 13, 2024.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. BOST, from the Committee on Veterans' Affairs,  
 submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany H.R. 3722]

[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Committee on Veterans' Affairs, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 3722) to require a pilot program on activities under the pre-separation transition process of members of the Armed Forces for a reduction in suicide among veterans, and for other purposes, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon with an amendment and recommends that the bill as amended do pass.

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The amendment is as follows:

Strike all that follows after the enacting clause and insert the following:

**SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

This Act may be cited as the “Daniel J. Harvey, Jr. and Adam Lambert Improving Servicemember Transition to Reduce Veteran Suicide Act”.

**SEC. 2. ADDRESSING MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES IN THE TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AND THE SOLID START PROGRAM OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

(a) **TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE.**—Section 1142(b) of title 10, United States Code, is amended—

- (1) in paragraph (5), by inserting “(11),” before “and (16)”;
- (2) by striking paragraph (11) and inserting the following:

“(11) Information concerning mental health, including—

“(A) the availability of mental health services furnished by the Secretary concerned, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, or a non-profit entity;

“(B) the treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, anxiety disorders, depression, chronic pain, sleep disorders, suicidal ideation, or other mental health conditions associated with service in the armed forces;

“(C) the risk of suicide, including signs, symptoms, and risk factors (including adverse childhood experiences, depression, bipolar disorder, homelessness, unemployment, and relationship strain);

“(D) the availability of treatment options and resources to address substance abuse, including alcohol, prescription drug, and opioid abuse;

“(E) the potential effects of the loss of community and support systems experienced by a member separating from the armed forces;

“(F) isolation from family, friends, or society; and

“(G) the potential stressors associated with separation from the armed forces.”

(b) **SOLID START PROGRAM OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**—Section 6320(b)(1) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating subparagraphs (G) and (H) as subparagraphs (I) and (J), respectively; and

(2) by inserting after subparagraph (F) the following new subparagraphs:

“(G) assisting eligible veterans who elect to enroll in the system of patient enrollment under section 1705(a) of this title;

“(H) educating veterans about mental health and counseling services available through the Veterans Health Administration;”

(c) **REPORT.**—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall jointly submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on the information and materials developed pursuant to the amendments made by this Act.

(d) **APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DEFINED.**—In this section, the term “appropriate congressional committees” means—

(1) the Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate; and

(2) the Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives.

**PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

H.R. 3722, the “Daniel J. Harvey, Jr. and Adam Lambert Improving Servicemember Transition to Reduce Veteran Suicide Act,” was introduced by Rep. Zachary Nunn of Iowa on May 25, 2023. H.R. 3722, as amended, would incorporate and improve suicide prevention provisions into the VA Solid Start program and the Transition Assistance Program to address some of the issues highlighted in the bill.

## BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR LEGISLATION

*Section 1: Short title*

This Act may be cited as the “Daniel J. Harvey, Jr. and Adam Lambert Improving Servicemember Transition to Reduce Veteran Suicide Act.”

*Section 2: Addressing mental health issues in the Transition Assistance Program of the Department of Defense and the Solid Start Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs*

According to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) “2023 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report,” in 2021, 6,392 Veterans died by suicide, which is an increase of 114 suicides from 2020. When looking at increases in rates from 2020 to 2021, the age- and sex-adjusted suicide rate among veterans increased by 11.6%, while the age- and sex-adjusted suicide rate among non-veteran U.S. adults increased by 4.5%.

The Committee believes that it is essential to address this disparity in suicide rates and provide more outreach to veterans who may be in crisis. One of the most vulnerable times for a veteran is the period of transition from military to civilian life. The Transition Assistance Program (TAP) is designed to assist with this transition by providing servicemembers with resources to make the transition go smoothly. These include information on writing a resume, proper interviewing techniques, building a business, and using education and other benefits that are available for veterans. Because the first year of transition is such a critical one, it is essential to incorporate additional resources into the Transition Assistance Program and the Solid Start program.

This section would amend 10 U.S.C. § 1142 and revise TAP for servicemembers who are leaving the military in the next year. Through oversight hearings, roundtables, and visits to military installations, the first year after transition is often a difficult time for veterans as they try to determine next steps after life in the military. Transitioning to civilian life can lead to financial insecurity and a loss of identity for some veterans. Stress factors include finding employment, searching for adequate housing, or starting college or job training. Additionally, many servicemembers may move away from friends or family and therefore will lack a safety net.

TAP was designed to provide valuable information to servicemembers to ease the transition from military to civilian life. While it currently provides helpful resources on veterans’ benefits, interviewing skills, resume building, and academic pursuits, the Committee believes it does not provide adequate information on how to address the stressors that come with transition and where to get help if these stressors become overwhelming.

Under this section, TAP would be modified to include additional information about some of the key stressors that are associated with this transition and military service. Information such as the mental health factors that are frequently associated with a higher risk of suicide and information related to treatment for mental health conditions that are frequently associated with service in the armed forces would be provided. It would also provide information on treatment options for substance use disorder as well as information related to dealing with feelings of isolation and the loss of com-

munity many individuals experience after separation from the military.

The Solid Start program is an outreach service offered by the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) that seeks to assist servicemembers transitioning to civilian life. The program involves outreach by phone from representatives of the VA during the first year after separation to provide information about benefits available to veterans. The telephone calls offer mental health support and provide information on benefits and resources to help with transition.

This section would also amend 38 U.S.C. § 6320 to require additional information in the Solid Start program on enrollment in VA health care services and mental health counseling and treatment services that are available for veterans.

The final provision of this section would require a report to Congress on the tools that are developed under this legislation. The Committee believes that additional outreach to transitioning servicemembers is essential in combatting suicide, especially during the first year after transition. This report would help the Committee to understand how these tools are being utilized and whether additional resources are necessary.

#### HEARINGS

On November 2, 2023, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity held a legislative hearing on H.R. 3722 and other bills that were pending before the subcommittee.

The following witnesses testified:

Mr. Joseph Garcia, Executive Director of Education Service, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Nick Pamperin, Executive Director Veterans Readiness and Employment Services, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. James Ruhlman, Deputy Director of Education Services, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Margarita Devlin, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Operations and Management, U.S. Department of Labor; Ms. Kristina Keenan, Deputy Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; Mr. Marquis Barefield, Assistant National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; Ms. Tammy Barlet, Vice President of Government Affairs, Student Veterans of America; Mr. Joseph W. Wescott II, Legislative Director, National Association of State Approving Agencies, Inc., and Mr. Micheal Hazard, Veterans in Piping Program Manager, United Association of Journeyman and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipefitting Industry of the United States and Canada.

The following organizations submitted statements for the record:

Commercial Vehicle Training Association, National Association of State Workforce Agencies, The American Legion, Veterans Education Project, and Veterans Education Success.

#### SUBCOMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

On November 15, 2023, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity held a markup on H.R. 3722.

An amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 3722 offered by Rep. Van Orden was adopted by voice vote. The amendment in

the nature of a substitute replaced the pilot program in the introduced bill with changes to the Transition Assistance Program and the Solid Start program.

A motion by Rep. Levin to favorably forward H.R. 3722, as amended, was agreed to by voice vote.

#### COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

On December 5, 2023, the full Committee met in open markup session, a quorum being present, and ordered H.R. 3722, as amended, to be reported favorably to the House of Representatives by voice vote. During consideration of the bill no amendments were considered.

A motion by Ranking Member Takano to report H.R. 3722, as amended, favorably to the House of Representatives was agreed to by voice vote.

#### COMMITTEE VOTES

In compliance with clause 3(b) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, no recorded votes were taken on amendments or in connection with ordering H.R. 3722, as amended, reported to the House.

#### COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT FINDINGS

In compliance with clause 3(c)(1) of rule XIII and clause (2)(b)(1) of rule X of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee's oversight findings and recommendations are reflected in the descriptive portions of this report.

#### STATEMENT OF GENERAL PERFORMANCE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

In accordance with clause 3(c)(4) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee's performance goals and objectives of H.R. 3722, as amended, are to increase awareness and provide additional outreach through the Transition Assistance Program and the Solid Start program on suicide prevention.

#### EARMARKS AND TAX AND TARIFF BENEFITS

H.R. 3722, as amended, does not contain any Congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9 of rule XXI of the Rules of the House of Representatives.

#### COMMITTEE COST ESTIMATE

The Committee adopts as its own the Congressional Budget Office cost estimate on this measure.

BUDGET AUTHORITY AND CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST  
ESTIMATE

<b>H.R. 3722, Daniel J. Harvey, Jr. and Adam Lambert Improving Servicemember Transition to Reduce Veteran Suicide Act</b>			
As ordered reported by the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs on December 5, 2023			
By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars	2024	2024-2028	2024-2033
Direct Spending (Outlays)	0	0	0
Revenues	0	0	0
Increase or Decrease (-) in the Deficit	0	0	0
Spending Subject to Appropriation (Outlays)	*	*	not estimated
Increases <i>net direct spending</i> in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2034?	No	Statutory pay-as-you-go procedures apply? No	
		<b>Mandate Effects</b>	
Increases <i>on-budget deficits</i> in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2034?	No	Contains intergovernmental mandate? No	
		Contains private-sector mandate? No	
* = between zero and \$500,000.			

H.R. 3722 would require the Department of Defense (DoD) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to use DoD's Transition Assistance Program and VA's Solid Start program to provide certain information to servicemembers who are separating from the U.S. Armed Forces. The information would include how to access resources for treating mental health conditions, substance and alcohol use disorders, homelessness, and other risk factors for suicide.

Under current law, VA helps transitioning servicemembers receive health care and other benefits from the department and works with DoD and other federal agencies to offer resources to servicemembers and their families as they transition to civilian life. The Veterans Health Administration has 48 nurses and social workers working as liaisons at 26 DoD installations and military treatment facilities. Those staff members assess various needs of separating military personnel, including the need for services aimed at preventing suicide and homelessness. The liaisons also help people register for VA health care and connect them with case management teams for ongoing care and services.

CBO expects that VA and DoD are generally satisfying the requirements of the bill under current law; thus, CBO estimates that implementing the bill would not significantly affect the federal budget.

The bill would require DoD and VA to jointly report on the information and materials that support their programs' work in providing resources. Based on costs for similar activities, CBO estimates that satisfying that requirement would cost less than \$500,000 over the 2024–2028 period; any spending would be subject to the appropriation of available amounts.

On April 17, 2023, CBO transmitted a cost estimate for S. 132, the Daniel J. Harvey Jr. and Adam Lambert Improving Servicemember Transition to Reduce Veteran Suicide Act, as ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs on February

16, 2023. The requirements of the bills are similar and the estimated costs are the same.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Etaf Khan. The estimate was reviewed by Christina Hawley Anthony, Deputy Director of Budget Analysis.

PHILLIP L. SWAGEL,  
*Director, Congressional Budget Office.*

#### FEDERAL MANDATES STATEMENT

Section 423 of the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act (as amended by Section 101(a)(2) of the Unfunded Mandate Reform Act, P.L. 104–4 is inapplicable to H.R. 3722, as amended.

#### ADVISORY COMMITTEE STATEMENT

No advisory committees within the meaning of section 5(b) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act would be created by H.R. 3722, as amended.

#### APPLICABILITY TO LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

The Committee finds that H.R. 3722, as amended, does not relate to the terms and conditions of employment or access to public services or accommodations within the meaning of section 102(b)(3) of the Congressional Accountability Act.

#### STATEMENT ON DUPLICATION OF FEDERAL PROGRAMS

Pursuant to clause 3(c)(5) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee finds that no provision of H.R. 3722, as amended, would establish or reauthorize a program of the Federal Government known to be duplicative of another Federal program, a program that was included in any report from the Government Accountability Office to Congress pursuant to section 21 of Public Law 111–139, or a program related to a program identified in the most recent Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance.

#### SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS OF THE LEGISLATION

##### *Section 1. Short title*

This section would establish the short title of the bill as the “Daniel J. Harvey, Jr. and Adam Lambert Improving Servicemember Transition to Reduce Veteran Suicide Act.”

##### *Section 2. Addressing mental health issues in the Transition Assistance Program of the Department of Defense and the Solid Start Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs*

This section would amend 10 U.S.C. § 1142(b)(11) to provide additional resources related to mental health treatment and services into the Transition Assistance Programs. Specifically, this section would provide information on the following: availability of mental health services for veterans, the treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and other mental health conditions associated with service in the armed forces; the risk of suicide, including signs, symptoms, and risk factors; the availability of treatment options and resources to address substance use disorder, the potential effects of the loss of community and support systems experienced

during transition; possible feelings of isolation from family and friends; and the potential stressors related to transition.

This section would also amend the Solid Start program under 38 U.S.C. § 6320(b)(1) to ensure that the outreach conducted by VBA would include assistance for patients enrolled in veterans' health care programs and education about the mental health and counseling services available through the Veterans Health Administration.

Finally, this section would require a report by the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to the appropriate Congressional committees on the information and materials developed under this legislation.

#### CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW MADE BY THE BILL, AS REPORTED

In compliance with clause 3(e) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, changes in existing law made by the bill, as reported, are shown as follows (existing law proposed to be omitted is enclosed in black brackets, new matter is printed in italics, existing law in which no change is proposed is shown in roman):

#### CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW MADE BY THE BILL, AS REPORTED

In compliance with clause 3(e) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, changes in existing law made by the bill, as reported, are shown as follows (existing law proposed to be omitted is enclosed in black brackets, new matter is printed in italics, and existing law in which no change is proposed is shown in roman):

### TITLE 10, UNITED STATES CODE

\* \* \* \* \*

### SUBTITLE A—GENERAL MILITARY LAW

\* \* \* \* \*

### PART II—PERSONNEL

\* \* \* \* \*

### CHAPTER 58—BENEFITS AND SERVICES FOR MEMBERS BEING SEPARATED OR RECENTLY SEPARATED

\* \* \* \* \*

#### **§ 1142. Preseparation counseling; transmittal of certain records to Department of Veterans Affairs**

(a) REQUIREMENT.—(1) Within the time periods specified in paragraph (3), the Secretary concerned shall (except as provided in paragraph (4)) provide for individual preseparation counseling of each member of the armed forces whose discharge (regardless of character of discharge) or release from active duty is anticipated as of a specific date. A notation of the provision of such counseling with respect to each matter specified in subsection (b), signed by

the member, shall be placed in the service record of each member receiving such counseling.

(2) In carrying out this section, the Secretary concerned shall use the services available under section 1144 of this title.

(3)(A) In the case of an anticipated retirement, preseparation counseling shall commence as soon as possible during the 24-month period preceding the anticipated retirement date. In the case of a separation other than a retirement, preseparation counseling shall commence not later than 365 days before the anticipated date. Except as provided in subparagraph (B), in no event shall preseparation counseling commence later than 365 days before the date of retirement or other separation.

(B) In the event that a retirement or other separation is unanticipated until there are 365 or fewer days before the anticipated retirement or separation date, or in the event a member of a reserve component is being demobilized under circumstances in which (as determined by the Secretary concerned) operational requirements make the 365-day requirement under subparagraph (A) unfeasible, preseparation counseling shall begin as soon as possible within the remaining period of service.

(4)(A) Subject to subparagraph (B), the Secretary concerned shall not provide preseparation counseling to a member who is being discharged or released before the completion of the first 180 continuous days of active duty of the member.

(B) Subparagraph (A) shall not apply in the case of a member who is being retired or separated for disability.

(C) For purposes of calculating the days of active duty of a member under subparagraph (A), the Secretary concerned shall exclude any day on which—

(i) the member performed full-time training duty or annual training duty; and

(ii) the member attended, while in the active military service, a school designated as a service school by law or by the Secretary concerned.

(b) MATTERS TO BE COVERED BY COUNSELING.—Counseling under this section shall include the following:

(1) A discussion of the educational assistance benefits to which the member is entitled under the Montgomery GI Bill and other educational assistance programs because of the member's service in the armed forces.

(2) A description (to be developed with the assistance of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs) of the compensation and vocational rehabilitation benefits to which the member may be entitled under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, if the member is being medically separated or is being retired under chapter 61 of this title.

(3) An explanation of the procedures for and advantages of affiliating with the Selected Reserve.

(4) Provision of information on civilian occupations and related assistance programs, including information concerning—

(A) certification and licensure requirements that are applicable to civilian occupations, including State-submitted and approved lists of military training and skills that satisfy occupational certifications and licenses;

(B) civilian occupations that correspond to military occupational specialties; and

(C) Government and private-sector programs for job search and job placement assistance, including information regarding the placement programs established under sections 1152 and 1153 of this title and the Troops-to-Teachers Program.

(5) If the member has a spouse, inclusion of the spouse, at the discretion of the member and the spouse, when counseling regarding the matters covered by paragraphs (9), (10), (11), and (16) is provided, job placement counseling for the spouse, and the provision of information on survivor benefits available under the laws administered by the Secretary of Defense or the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

(6) Information concerning the availability of relocation assistance services and other benefits and services available to persons leaving military service, as provided under section 1144 of this title.

(7) Information concerning the availability of medical and dental coverage following separation from active duty, including the opportunity to elect into the conversion health policy provided under section 1145 of this title.

(8) Counseling (for the member and dependents) on the effect of career change on individuals and their families and the availability to the member and dependents of suicide prevention resources following separation from the armed forces.

(9) Financial planning assistance, including information on budgeting, saving, credit, loans, and taxes.

(10) The creation of a transition plan for the member to attempt to achieve the educational, training, employment, and financial objectives of the member and, if the member has a spouse, the spouse of the member.

【(11) Information concerning the availability of mental health services and the treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety disorders, depression, suicidal ideations, or other mental health conditions associated with service in the armed forces and information concerning the availability of treatment options and resources to address substance abuse, including alcohol, prescription drug, and opioid abuse.】

(11) *Information concerning mental health, including—*

*(A) the availability of mental health services furnished by the Secretary concerned, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, or a non-profit entity;*

*(B) the treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, anxiety disorders, depression, chronic pain, sleep disorders, suicidal ideation, or other mental health conditions associated with service in the armed forces;*

*(C) the risk of suicide, including signs, symptoms, and risk factors (including adverse childhood experiences, depression, bipolar disorder, homelessness, unemployment, and relationship strain);*

*(D) the availability of treatment options and resources to address substance abuse, including alcohol, prescription drug, and opioid abuse;*

*(E) the potential effects of the loss of community and support systems experienced by a member separating from the armed forces;*

*(F) isolation from family, friends, or society; and*

*(G) the potential stressors associated with separation from the armed forces.*

(12) Information concerning the priority of service for veterans in the receipt of employment, training, and placement services provided under qualified job training programs of the Department of Labor.

(13) Information concerning veterans small business ownership and entrepreneurship programs of the Small Business Administration.

(14) Information concerning employment and reemployment rights and obligations under chapter 43 of title 38.

(15) Information concerning veterans preference in Federal employment and Federal procurement opportunities.

(16) Information on home loan services and housing assistance benefits available under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and counseling on responsible borrowing practices.

(17) A description, developed in consultation with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, of health care and other benefits to which the member may be entitled under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and information regarding the means by which the member can receive additional counseling regarding the member's actual entitlement to such benefits and apply for such benefits.

(18) A description, developed in consultation with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, of the assistance and support services for family caregivers of eligible veterans under the program conducted by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs pursuant to section 1720G of title 38, including the veterans covered by the program, the caregivers eligible for assistance and support through the program, and the assistance and support available through the program.

(19) Information regarding how to file claims for benefits available to the member under laws administered by the Secretaries of Defense and Veterans Affairs.

(c) COUNSELING PATHWAYS.—(1) Each Secretary concerned, in consultation with the Secretaries of Labor and Veterans Affairs, shall establish at least three pathways for members of the military department concerned receiving individualized counseling under this section. The Secretaries shall design the pathways to address the needs of members, based on the following factors:

(A) Rank.

(B) Term of service.

(C) Gender.

(D) Whether the member was a member of a regular or reserve component of an armed force.

(E) Disability.

(F) Character of discharge (including expedited discharge and discharge under conditions other than honorable).

(G) Health (including mental health).

(H) Military occupational specialty.

- (I) Whether the member intends, after separation, retirement, or discharge, to—
  - (i) seek employment;
  - (ii) enroll in a program of higher education;
  - (iii) enroll in a program of vocational training; or
  - (iv) become an entrepreneur.

(J) The educational history of the member.

(K) The employment history of the member.

(L) Whether the member has secured—

- (i) employment;
- (ii) enrollment in a program of education; or
- (iii) enrollment in a program of vocational training.

(M) Other factors the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Homeland Security, in consultation with the Secretaries of Labor and Veterans Affairs, determine appropriate.

(2) Each member described in subsection (a) shall meet in person or by video conference with a counselor before beginning counseling under this section to—

(A) take a self-assessment designed by the Secretary concerned (in consultation with the Secretaries of Labor and Veterans Affairs) to ensure that the Secretary concerned places the member in the appropriate pathway under this subsection;

(B) receive information from the counselor regarding reenlistment in the armed forces; and

(C) receive information from the counselor regarding resources (including resources regarding military sexual trauma)—

(i) for members of the armed forces separated, retired, or discharged;

(ii) located in the community in which the member will reside after separation, retirement, or discharge.

(3) At the meeting under paragraph (2), the member may elect to have the Secretary concerned (in consultation with the Secretaries of Labor and Veterans Affairs) provide the contact information of the member to the resources described in paragraph (2)(C).

(d) TRANSMITTAL OF MEDICAL INFORMATION TO DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.—In the case of a member being medically separated or being retired under chapter 61 of this title, the Secretary concerned shall ensure (subject to the consent of the member) that a copy of the member’s service medical record (including any results of a Physical Evaluation Board) is transmitted to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs within 60 days of the separation or retirement.

(e) JOINT SERVICE TRANSCRIPT.—The Secretary concerned shall provide a copy of the joint service transcript of a member described in subsection (a) to—

(1) that member—

(A) at the meeting with a counselor under subsection (c)(2); and

(B) on the day the member separates, retires, or is discharged; and

(2) the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on the day the member separates, retires, or is discharged.

\* \* \* \* \*

**TITLE 38, UNITED STATES CODE**

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**PART IV—GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE  
PROVISIONS**

\* \* \* \* \*

**CHAPTER 63—OUTREACH ACTIVITIES**

\* \* \* \* \*

**SUBCHAPTER II—OTHER OUTREACH PROGRAMS AND  
ACTIVITIES**

**§ 6320. Solid Start program**

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary shall carry out a program, to be known as the “Solid Start program”, under which the Secretary shall—

(1) build the capacity of the Department to efficiently and effectively respond to the queries and needs of veterans who have recently separated from the Armed Forces; and

(2) systemically integrate and coordinate efforts to assist veterans, including efforts—

(A) to proactively reach out to newly separated veterans to inform them of their eligibility for programs of and benefits provided by the Department; and

(B) to connect veterans in crisis to resources that address their immediate needs.

(b) **ACTIVITIES OF THE SOLID START PROGRAM.**—(1) The Secretary, in coordination with the Secretary of Defense, shall carry out the Solid Start program of the Department by—

(A) collecting up-to-date contact information during transition classes or separation counseling for all members of the Armed Forces who are separating from the Armed Forces, while explaining the existence and purpose of the Solid Start program;

(B) calling each veteran, regardless of separation type or characterization of service, three times within the first year after separation of the veteran from the Armed Forces;

(C) providing information about the Solid Start program on the website of the Department and in materials of the Department, especially transition booklets and other resources;

(D) ensuring calls are truly tailored to the needs of each veteran’s unique situation by conducting quality assurance tests;

(E) prioritizing outreach to veterans who have accessed mental health resources prior to separation from the Armed Forces;

(F) providing women veterans with information that is tailored to their specific health care and benefit needs;

(G) *assisting eligible veterans who elect to enroll in the system of patient enrollment under section 1705(a) of this title;*

(H) *educating veterans about mental health and counseling services available through the Veterans Health Administration;*

[(G)] (I) as feasible, providing information on access to State and local resources, including Vet Centers and veterans service organizations; and

[(H)] (J) gathering and analyzing data assessing the effectiveness of the Solid Start program.

(2) The Secretary, in coordination with the Secretary of Defense, may carry out the Solid Start program by—

(A) encouraging members of the Armed Forces who are transitioning to civilian life to authorize alternate points of contact who can be reached should the member be unavailable during the first year following the separation of the member from the Armed Forces; and

(B) following up missed phone calls with tailored mailings to ensure the veteran still receives similar information.

(3) In this subsection:

(A) The term “Vet Center” has the meaning given that term in section 1712A(h) of this title.

(B) The term “veterans service organization” means an organization recognized by the Secretary for the representation of veterans under section 5902 of this title.

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