

106TH CONGRESS  
2ND SESSION

# S. 2007

To amend title 38, United States Code, to improve procedures relating to the scheduling of appointments for certain non-emergency medical services from the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JANUARY 26, 2000

Mr. CONRAD introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

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## A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to improve procedures relating to the scheduling of appointments for certain non-emergency medical services from 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. IMPROVEMENT OF PROCEDURES RELATING TO**  
4                       **SCHEDULING OF APPOINTMENTS FOR CER-**  
5                       **TAIN NON-EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES.**

6       (a) IN GENERAL.—(1) Subchapter I of chapter 17  
7       of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting  
8       after section 1706 the following new section:

1 **“§ 1706A. Management of health care: appointments**  
2 **for certain non-emergency medical serv-**  
3 **ices**

4 “(a) The Secretary shall establish a priority in the  
5 scheduling of appointments for non-emergency medical  
6 services furnished by the Secretary through medical spe-  
7 cialists for veterans with service-connected disabilities.

8 “(b) If the scheduled date of an appointment of a  
9 veteran with a service-connected disability for non-emer-  
10 gency medical services to be furnished by the Secretary  
11 through a medical specialist is more than three weeks later  
12 than the date the appointment is made, the Secretary  
13 shall—

14 “(1) provide for the immediate review of the ap-  
15 pointment; and

16 “(2) furnish the medical services covered by the  
17 appointment to the veteran at an earlier date than  
18 the scheduled date of the appointment—

19 “(A) through a Department medical spe-  
20 cialist at another Department facility; or

21 “(B) through a non-Department medical  
22 specialist located in the area in which the vet-  
23 eran resides.”.

24 (2) The table of sections at the beginning of chapter  
25 17 of that title is amended by inserting after the item re-  
26 lating to section 1706 the following new item:

“1706A. Management of health care: appointments for certain non-emergency medical services.”.

1 (b) ANNUAL REPORT ON SHORTAGES IN MEDICAL  
2 SPECIALTY PERSONNEL.—(1) Not later than January 31  
3 each year, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit  
4 to Congress a report on any shortages in medical specialty  
5 personnel in the Veterans Health Administration during  
6 the preceding year.

7 (2) The report under paragraph (1) for a year shall—

8 (A) set forth the average waiting period during  
9 the year for veterans with service-connected disabili-  
10 ties for various types of non-emergency medical  
11 services furnished by medical specialty personnel at  
12 each Department of Veterans Affairs medical center;

13 (B) set forth any shortages in medical specialty  
14 personnel identified by the Secretary during the  
15 year; and

16 (C) include the recommendations of the Sec-  
17 retary for means of addressing such shortages, in-  
18 cluding recommendations, if appropriate, for special  
19 pays, adjustments in pay, or other modifications of  
20 pay authority necessary to recruit or retain appro-  
21 priate medical specialty personnel.

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