

113TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 4875

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to publish information on the provision of health care by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 17, 2014

Mr. BOUSTANY (for himself and Mr. ROE of Tennessee) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to publish information on the provision of health care by 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. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Equalizing Trans-
5 parency for Veterans Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. PUBLICATION OF INFORMATION ON PROVISION OF**
7 **HEALTH CARE BY DEPARTMENT OF VET-**
8 **ERANS AFFAIRS.**

9 (a) PUBLICATION OF INFORMATION.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than two years
2 after the date of the enactment of this Act, and bi-
3 ennially thereafter, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs
4 shall publish on an Internet database of the Depart-
5 ment of Veterans Affairs that is publically available
6 information on the provision of health care by the
7 Department of Veterans Affairs.

8 (2) ELEMENTS.—

9 (A) MEDICAL FACILITIES.—With respect
10 to each medical facility of the Department, in-
11 cluding community based outpatient clinics,
12 each publication required by paragraph (1)
13 shall include, at a minimum, the following:

14 (i) The measures regarding inpatient
15 and outpatient care made publically avail-
16 able by the Secretary of Health and
17 Human Services pursuant to section
18 1886(b)(3)(B)(viii)(VII) of the Social Se-
19 curity Act (42 U.S.C.
20 1395ww(b)(3)(B)(viii)(VII)), including
21 with respect to emergency department
22 throughput measures, hospital consumer
23 assessment of health-care providers and
24 systems, and the national healthcare safety
25 network.

1 (ii) Per each discharged patient of
2 such a facility—

3 (I) the average length of stay;

4 (II) the opioid prescription rate;

5 and

6 (III) the suicide rate.

7 (iii) The average number of days a
8 patient waited beginning on the date on
9 which an appointment or procedure was re-
10 quested and ending on the date on which
11 the appointment or procedure occurred.

12 (B) NURSING HOMES.—With respect to
13 each nursing home of the Department of Vet-
14 erans Affairs, each publication required by
15 paragraph (1) shall include, at a minimum, any
16 measures that the Secretary of Health and
17 Human Services makes publically available with
18 respect to Medicare nursing homes.

19 (C) PERIOD COVERED.—The information
20 included pursuant to subparagraphs (A) and
21 (B) in each publication required by paragraph
22 (1) shall cover the period that the Secretary of
23 Veterans Affairs determines is equivalent to the
24 period covered by the Secretary of Health and

1 Human Services in publishing similar informa-
2 tion.

3 (3) PERSONAL INFORMATION.—The Secretary
4 shall ensure that personal information connected to
5 information published under paragraph (1) is pro-
6 tected from disclosure as required by applicable law.

7 (b) VALIDATION.—The Secretary shall establish a
8 process to validate the information published under sub-
9 section (a). Such process shall include the following:

10 (1) An audit of a number of randomly selected
11 medical facilities that is sufficient to ensure the va-
12 lidity of such information.

13 (2) An opportunity for a medical facility de-
14 scribed in paragraph (1) to appeal the validation of
15 such information.

16 (c) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than 30 days after
17 the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually there-
18 after, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report that
19 includes—

20 (1) a listing of the facilities of the Department
21 that rank within the bottom quartile on each quality
22 measure used by the Secretary to determine such
23 rankings, including, as applicable, the measures used
24 in the database under subsection (a); and

25 (2) a plan to improve each such facility.

1 (d) COMPTROLLER GENERAL REPORT.—Not later
2 than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act,
3 the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit
4 to Congress a report setting forth recommendations for
5 additional elements to be included with the information
6 published under subsection (a) to improve the evaluation
7 and assessment of the safety and health of individuals re-
8 ceiving care under the laws administered by the Secretary
9 and the quality of care received by such individuals.

10 (e) TOLL-FREE HOTLINE ON CARE PROVIDED.—Not
11 later than two years after the date of the enactment of
12 this Act, the Secretary shall—

13 (1) establish a toll-free telephone number for
14 individuals to use to notify the Secretary of low-
15 quality care being provided at a health care facility
16 of the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

17 (2) ensure that patients at such a health care
18 facility, and caregivers of such patients, are in-
19 formed of such telephone number.

○