

113TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 49

To amend title 38, United States Code, to ensure that veterans in each of the 48 contiguous States are able to receive services in at least one full-service Department of Veterans Affairs medical center in the State or receive comparable services provided by contract in the State, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JANUARY 22 (legislative day, JANUARY 3), 2013

Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself and Ms. AYOTTE) introduced the following bill;
which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to ensure that veterans in each of the 48 contiguous States are able to receive services in at least one full-service Department of Veterans Affairs medical center in the State or receive comparable services provided by contract in the State, 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 Health Eq-
5 uity Act of 2013”.

1 **SEC. 2. AVAILABILITY OF FULL-SERVICE DEPARTMENT OF**
 2 **VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTERS IN**
 3 **CERTAIN STATES OR PROVISION OF COM-**
 4 **PARABLE SERVICES THROUGH CONTRACT**
 5 **WITH OTHER HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS IN**
 6 **THE STATE.**

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

10 **“§ 1706A. Management of health care: access to full-**
 11 **service Department medical centers in**
 12 **certain States or comparable services**
 13 **through contract**

14 “(a) REQUIREMENT.—With respect to each of the 48
 15 contiguous States, the Secretary shall ensure that veterans
 16 in a State who are eligible for hospital care and medical
 17 services under section 1710 of this title have access—

18 “(1) to at least one full-service Department
 19 medical center in the State; or

20 “(2) to hospital care and medical services com-
 21 parable to the services typically provided by full-
 22 service Department medical centers through contract
 23 with other health care providers in the State.

24 “(b) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in sub-
 25 section (a) shall be construed to limit the ability of the
 26 Secretary to provide enhanced care to an eligible veteran

1 who resides in one State in a Department medical center
 2 in another State.

3 “(c) LIMITATION ON REQUIREMENT.—Subsection (a)
 4 shall be effective in any fiscal year only to the extent and
 5 in the amount provided in advance in appropriations Acts.

6 “(d) FULL-SERVICE DEPARTMENT MEDICAL CEN-
 7 TER DEFINED.—In this section, the term ‘full-service De-
 8 partment medical center’ means a facility of the Depart-
 9 ment that provides medical services, including hospital
 10 care, emergency medical services, and surgical care rated
 11 by the Secretary as having a surgical complexity level of
 12 standard.”.

13 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections
 14 at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting
 15 after the item relating to section 1706 the following new
 16 item:

“1706A. Management of health care: access to full-service Department medical
 centers in certain States or comparable services through con-
 tract.”.

17 (c) REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION.—Not later than
 18 one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the
 19 Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to Congress a
 20 report describing the extent to which the Secretary has
 21 complied with the requirement imposed by section 1706A
 22 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection

- 1 (a), including the effect of such requirement on improving
- 2 the quality and standards of care provided to veterans.

