

114TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 714

To require the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to jointly conduct a pilot program to assess the feasibility and advisability of expanding the use by the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs of physician assistants specializing in psychiatric medicine, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 11, 2015

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

A BILL

To require the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to jointly conduct a pilot program to assess the feasibility and advisability of expanding the use by the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs of physician assistants specializing in psychiatric medicine, 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 “Frontline Mental
5 Health Provider Training Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. PILOT PROGRAM ON EXPANSION OF USE OF PHYSI-**
2 **CIAN ASSISTANTS TO PROVIDE MENTAL**
3 **HEALTH CARE TO MEMBERS OF THE ARMED**
4 **FORCES AND VETERANS.**

5 (a) PILOT PROGRAM.—Not later than one year after
6 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of
7 Defense and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs (in this sec-
8 tion referred to as the “Secretaries”) shall jointly com-
9 mence the conduct of a pilot program to assess the feasi-
10 bility and advisability of expanding the use by the Depart-
11 ment of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs
12 of physician assistants specializing in psychiatric medicine
13 at medical facilities of the Department of Defense and the
14 Department of Veterans Affairs in order to meet the in-
15 creasing demand for mental health care providers at such
16 facilities through the use of an 18-month psychiatry fel-
17 lowship program for physician assistants.

18 (b) LOCATIONS.—

19 (1) DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE.—The Sec-
20 retary of Defense shall carry out the pilot program
21 at not less than three military medical treatment fa-
22 cilities, of which—

23 (A) not less than one shall be a military
24 medical treatment facility under the jurisdiction
25 of the Secretary of the Army;

1 (B) not less than one shall be a military
 2 medical treatment facility under the jurisdiction
 3 of the Secretary of the Navy; and

4 (C) not less than one shall be a military
 5 medical treatment facility under the jurisdiction
 6 of the Secretary of the Air Force.

7 (2) DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.—
 8 The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall carry out
 9 the pilot program at not less than three medical cen-
 10 ters of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

11 (c) ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS.—

12 (1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in para-
 13 graph (2), an individual eligible for participation in
 14 the pilot program is an individual who—

15 (A) has successfully graduated with a mas-
 16 ters degree in physician assistant studies from
 17 an accredited physician assistant program;

18 (B) is certified by the National Commis-
 19 sion on Certification of Physician Assistants;

20 (C) has a valid license, certification, and
 21 registration necessary to practice medicine; and

22 (D) does not have any pending challenge,
 23 investigation, revocation, restriction, discipli-
 24 nary action, suspension, reprimand, probation,
 25 denial, or withdrawal with respect to any li-

1 cense, certification, or registration described in
2 subparagraph (C).

3 (2) DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE.—With respect
4 to the conduct of the pilot program at a military
5 medical treatment facility, an individual eligible for
6 participation in the pilot program is an individual
7 who—

8 (A) qualifies as an eligible individual under
9 paragraph (1);

10 (B) is a commissioned officer in the Armed
11 Forces; and

12 (C) meets the requirements necessary to be
13 deployed as such an officer throughout the
14 world.

15 (d) SELECTION OF INDIVIDUALS.—

16 (1) IN GENERAL.—Each of the Secretaries shall
17 select not less than 12 individuals described in sub-
18 section (c) to participate in the pilot program for
19 each 18-month psychiatry fellowship program car-
20 ried out under subsection (e).

21 (2) DISTRIBUTION.—Each of the Secretaries
22 shall equally distribute the individuals selected under
23 paragraph (1) among the locations at which the pilot
24 program is to be carried out by such Secretary.

25 (e) PSYCHIATRY FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out the pilot
 2 program, the Secretaries shall establish an 18-month
 3 psychiatry fellowship program for physician assist-
 4 ants that meets the training model for acuity, mix-
 5 ture, and volume established for psychiatric resi-
 6 dency programs.

7 (2) TRAINING AND EDUCATION.—The psy-
 8 chiatric fellowship program established under para-
 9 graph (1) shall provide to eligible individuals who
 10 are selected for the program the following:

11 (A) Training that is equivalent to training
 12 received during a psychiatric residency with re-
 13 spect to guidelines, objectives, and milestones.

14 (B) Education leading to a clinical doc-
 15 torate of science in psychiatry that addresses
 16 the following:

- 17 (i) Inpatient care.
- 18 (ii) Outpatient care.
- 19 (iii) Emergency psychiatry.
- 20 (iv) Neurology, including child, adoles-
 21 cent, and geriatric neurology.
- 22 (v) Pain management.
- 23 (vi) Addictive psychiatry.
- 24 (vii) Psycho-pharmacology.
- 25 (viii) Traumatic brain injury.

1 (ix) Clinical practice guidelines.

2 (C) Education that addresses the par-
3 ticular needs of rural and other underserved
4 populations of members of the Armed Forces
5 and veterans to ensure a particular approach to
6 psychiatry that benefits those individuals.

7 (3) USE OF OTHER PROGRAMS.—In carrying
8 out the psychiatric fellowship program under para-
9 graph (1), the Secretaries shall use resources avail-
10 able to the Secretaries under existing graduate med-
11 ical education programs of the Department of De-
12 fense and the Department of Veterans Affairs to the
13 greatest extent possible.

14 (f) REPORTS ON PILOT PROGRAM.—

15 (1) INITIAL REPORT.—

16 (A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than two
17 years after the date on which the pilot program
18 commences under subsection (a), the Secre-
19 taries shall jointly submit to the appropriate
20 committees of Congress a report on the pilot
21 program.

22 (B) ELEMENTS.—The report required by
23 subparagraph (A) shall include the following:

24 (i) A description of the implementa-
25 tion of the pilot program at each location

1 of the pilot program, including a detailed
2 description of the education and training
3 provided under the pilot program at such
4 location.

5 (ii) A description and explanation of
6 differences, if any, in the implementation
7 and performance of the pilot program
8 among the locations of the pilot program.

9 (iii) An assessment of the satisfaction
10 of members of the Armed Forces and vet-
11 erans with mental health care provided
12 under the pilot program, including an as-
13 sessment of the outcomes of such care.

14 (iv) An assessment of cost savings, if
15 any, to the Federal Government resulting
16 from the pilot program.

17 (v) A description of improvements, if
18 any, to the access of members of the
19 Armed Forces and veterans to mental
20 health care resulting from the pilot pro-
21 gram.

22 (vi) A description of recommenda-
23 tions, if any, of the Secretaries of alter-
24 native methods to improve the access of
25 members of the Armed Forces and vet-

1 erans to mental health care other than
2 through the pilot program.

3 (vii) A recommendation as to the fea-
4 sibility and advisability of extending or ex-
5 panding the pilot program.

6 (2) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than 90 days
7 before the date on which the pilot program termi-
8 nates under subsection (g), the Secretaries shall
9 jointly submit to the appropriate committees of Con-
10 gress an update to the report submitted under para-
11 graph (1).

12 (3) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS
13 DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term “appro-
14 priate committees of Congress” means—

15 (A) the Committee on Armed Services and
16 the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the Sen-
17 ate; and

18 (B) the Committee on Armed Services and
19 the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the
20 House of Representatives.

21 (g) TERMINATION.—The authority of the Secretaries
22 to carry out the pilot program shall terminate upon the
23 completion of two 18-month psychiatry fellowship pro-
24 grams conducted under subsection (e).

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