

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2982

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to conduct a study of the barriers for women veterans to health care from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 23, 2019

Mr. CUNNINGHAM (for himself and Mrs. MURPHY) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to conduct a study of the barriers for women veterans to health care from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

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 “Women Veterans
5 Health Care Accountability Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. STUDY OF BARRIERS FOR WOMEN VETERANS TO**
7 **HEALTH CARE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF**
8 **VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

9 (a) STUDY REQUIRED.—The Secretary of Veterans
10 Affairs shall conduct a comprehensive study of the bar-

riers to the provision of comprehensive health care by the Department of Veterans Affairs encountered by women who are veterans. In conducting the study, the Secretary shall—

(1) survey women veterans who seek or receive hospital care or medical services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs as well as women veterans who do not seek or receive such care or services;

(2) administer the survey to a representative sample of women veterans from each Veterans Integrated Service Network; and

(3) ensure that the sample of women veterans surveyed is of sufficient size for the study results to be statistically significant and is a larger sample than that of the study referred to in subsection (b)(1).

(b) USE OF PREVIOUS STUDIES.—In conducting the study required by subsection (a), the Secretary shall build on the work of the studies of the Department of Veterans Affairs titled—

(1) “National Survey of Women Veterans in Fiscal Year 2007–2008”; and

(2) “Study of Barriers for Women Veterans to VA Health Care 2015”.

1 (c) ELEMENTS OF STUDY.—In conducting the study
2 required by subsection (a), the Secretary shall conduct re-
3 search on the effects of the following on the women vet-
4 erans surveyed in the study:

5 (1) The perceived stigma associated with seek-
6 ing mental health care services.

7 (2) The effect of driving distance or availability
8 of other forms of transportation to the nearest med-
9 ical facility on access to care.

10 (3) The availability of child care.

11 (4) The acceptability of integrated primary
12 care, women’s health clinics, or both.

13 (5) The comprehension of eligibility require-
14 ments for, and the scope of services available under,
15 hospital care and medical services.

16 (6) The perception of personal safety and com-
17 fort in inpatient, outpatient, and behavioral health
18 facilities.

19 (7) The gender sensitivity of health care pro-
20 viders and staff to issues that particularly affect
21 women.

22 (8) The effectiveness of outreach for health care
23 services available to women veterans.

1 (9) The location and operating hours of health
2 care facilities that provide services to women vet-
3 erans.

4 (10) Such other significant barriers as the Sec-
5 retary considers appropriate.

6 (d) DISCHARGE BY CONTRACT.—The Secretary shall
7 enter into a contract with a qualified independent entity
8 or organization to carry out the study and research re-
9 quired under this section.

10 (e) MANDATORY REVIEW OF DATA BY CERTAIN DE-
11 PARTMENT DIVISIONS.—

12 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall ensure
13 that the head of each division of the Department of
14 Veterans Affairs specified in paragraph (2) reviews
15 the results of the study conducted under this sec-
16 tion. The head of each such division shall submit
17 findings with respect to the study to the Under Sec-
18 retary for responsibilities relating to health care
19 services for women veterans.

20 (2) SPECIFIED DIVISIONS.—The divisions of the
21 Department of Veterans Affairs specified in this
22 paragraph are the following:

23 (A) The Center for Women Veterans estab-
24 lished under section 318 of title 38, United
25 States Code.

1 (B) The Advisory Committee on Women
2 Veterans established under section 542 of such
3 title.

4 (f) REPORT.—Not later than 30 months after the
5 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall sub-
6 mit to Congress a report on the study required under this
7 section. The report shall include recommendations for
8 such administrative and legislative action as the Secretary
9 considers appropriate. The report shall also include the
10 findings of the head of each division of the Department
11 specified under subsection (e)(2) and of the Under Sec-
12 retary for Health.

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