

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 8084

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to update the Lethal Means Safety and Suicide Prevention training course of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

AUGUST 21, 2020

Ms. UNDERWOOD (for herself, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, and Miss RICE of New York) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to update the Lethal Means Safety and Suicide Prevention training course of 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 “Lethal Means Safety
5 Training Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. SUICIDE RISK MANAGEMENT AND PREVENTION**
7 **AND LETHAL MEANS TRAINING.**

8 (a) IN GENERAL.—

1 (1) INITIAL UPDATE.—Not later than 180 days
2 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-
3 retary of Veterans Affairs, in consultation with enti-
4 ties described in subsection (c), shall update the Le-
5 thal Means Safety and Suicide Prevention training
6 course of the Department of Veterans Affairs to en-
7 sure that it is culturally appropriate and uses best
8 practices identified by appropriate subject matter ex-
9 perts.

10 (2) SUBSEQUENT UPDATES.—Not less fre-
11 quently than once each year, the Secretary shall up-
12 date the training as appropriate, taking into consid-
13 eration best practices, and publish a report on the
14 internet website of the Department that includes the
15 percentage of individuals in each category described
16 in paragraphs (2), (3), and (4) of subsection (b) who
17 completed the training referred to in paragraph (1)
18 during the year covered by the report.

19 (b) TRAINING.—

20 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall require
21 each employee referred to in paragraph (2) to take
22 the most recently updated version of the training
23 course referred to in subsection (a)—

1 (A) not later than 90 days after the date
2 such person is initially hired by the Depart-
3 ment; and

4 (B) at least once every year thereafter.

5 (2) COVERED EMPLOYEE.—An employee de-
6 scribed in this paragraph is any of the following:

7 (A) An employee of the Veterans Health
8 Administration or Veterans Benefits Adminis-
9 tration who regularly interacts with veterans in
10 the course of performing the employee's respon-
11 sibilities.

12 (B) A compensation and pension examiner,
13 including an employee of a contractor of the
14 Department who performs compensation and
15 pension examinations.

16 (C) An employee of a Veterans Center or
17 vocational rehabilitation facility.

18 (3) COMMUNITY CARE PROVIDERS.—As a condi-
19 tion of furnishing care through a non-Department
20 provider under section 1703 of title 38, United
21 States Code, the Secretary shall require any em-
22 ployee of such provider who provides such care to
23 take the most recently updated version of the train-
24 ing course referred to in subsection (a)—

1 (A) not later than 90 days after the date
2 on which the Secretary first agrees to furnish
3 any such care through such provider; and

4 (B) at least once every year thereafter.

5 (4) FAMILY CAREGIVERS.—As a condition of
6 providing support to a family caregiver under section
7 1720G of title 38, United States Code, the Secretary
8 shall require the caregiver to take the most recently
9 updated version of the training course referred to in
10 subsection (a)—

11 (A) not later than 90 days after the date
12 on which the caregiver first receives support
13 under such section; and

14 (B) at least once every year thereafter.

15 (c) ENTITIES DESCRIBED.—The entities described in
16 the subsection are the following:

17 (1) The Secretary of Health and Human Serv-
18 ices, in consultation with the Directors of the Na-
19 tional Institute of Mental Health, Substance Abuse
20 and Mental Health Services Administration, and
21 other appropriate Federal agencies.

22 (2) Experts in the assessment, treatment, and
23 management of individuals at risk for suicide.

24 (3) Professional associations that the Secretary
25 of Veterans Affairs determines are appropriate.

1 (4) Federal firearms license dealers and in-
2 structors.

3 (5) Experts in lethal means safety counseling
4 practice and education.

5 (6) The Department of Veterans Affairs Mental
6 Illness Research, Education, and Clinical Centers.

7 (7) Veterans service organizations.

8 (d) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—The Secretary shall
9 make the training course referred to in subsection (a) pub-
10 licly available on an internet website of the Department.

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