

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 3210

To require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Health and Human Services, to develop a clinical practice guideline or guidelines for the treatment of serious mental illness.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JANUARY 16, 2020

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

A BILL

To require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Health and Human Services, to develop a clinical practice guideline or guidelines for the treatment of serious mental illness.

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 “Improving Mental
5 Health Care for Veterans Act of 2020”.

1 **SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT BY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS**
2 **AFFAIRS AND DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE OF**
3 **CLINICAL PRACTICE GUIDELINES FOR THE**
4 **TREATMENT OF SERIOUS MENTAL ILLNESS.**

5 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than two years after the
6 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Vet-
7 erans Affairs, in consultation with the Secretary of De-
8 fense and the Secretary of Health and Human Services,
9 shall complete the development of a clinical practice guide-
10 line or guidelines for the treatment of serious mental ill-
11 ness, to include the following conditions:

12 (1) Schizophrenia.

13 (2) Schizoaffective disorder.

14 (3) Persistent mood disorder, including bipolar
15 disorder I and II.

16 (4) Any other mental, behavioral, or emotional
17 disorder resulting in serious functional impairment
18 that substantially interferes with major life activities
19 as the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in consultation
20 with the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of
21 Health and Human Services, considers appropriate.

22 (b) MATTERS INCLUDED IN GUIDELINES.—The clin-
23 ical practice guideline or guidelines developed under sub-
24 section (a) shall include the following:

25 (1) Guidance contained in the 2016 Clinical
26 Practice Guidelines for the Management of Major

1 Depressive Disorders of the Department of Veterans
2 Affairs and the Department of Defense.

3 (2) Guidance with respect to the treatment of
4 patients with a condition described in subsection (a).

5 (3) A list of evidence-based therapies for the
6 treatment of conditions described in subsection (a).

7 (4) An appropriate guideline for the administra-
8 tion of pharmacological therapy, psychological or be-
9 havioral therapy, or other therapy for the manage-
10 ment of conditions described in subsection (a).

11 (c) ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING GUIDELINES.—Not
12 later than two years after the date of the enactment of
13 this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in consultation
14 with the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Health
15 and Human Services, shall complete an assessment of the
16 2016 Clinical Practice Guidelines for the Management of
17 Major Depressive Disorders to determine whether an up-
18 date to such guidelines is necessary.

19 (d) WORK GROUP.—

20 (1) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of Vet-
21 erans Affairs, the Secretary of Defense, and the Sec-
22 retary of Health and Human Services shall create a
23 work group to develop the clinical practice guideline
24 or guidelines under subsection (a) to be known as

1 the “Serious Mental Illness Work Group” (in this
2 subsection referred to as the “Work Group”).

3 (2) MEMBERSHIP.—The Work Group created
4 under paragraph (1) shall be comprised of individ-
5 uals that represent Federal Government entities and
6 non-Federal Government entities with expertise in
7 the areas covered by the Work Group, including the
8 following entities:

9 (A) Academic institutions that specialize in
10 research for the treatment of conditions de-
11 scribed in subsection (a).

12 (B) The Health Services Research and De-
13 velopment Service of the Department of Vet-
14 erans Affairs.

15 (C) The Office of the Assistant Secretary
16 for Mental Health and Substance Use of the
17 Department of Health and Human Services.

18 (D) The National Institute of Mental
19 Health.

20 (E) The Indian Health Service.

21 (F) Relevant organizations with expertise
22 in researching, diagnosing, or treating condi-
23 tions described in subsection (a).

24 (3) RELATION TO OTHER WORK GROUPS.—The
25 Work Group shall be created and conducted in the

1 same manner as other work groups for the develop-
2 ment of clinical practice guidelines for the Depart-
3 ment of Veterans Affairs and the Department of De-
4 fense.

5 (e) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this sec-
6 tion shall be construed to prevent the Secretary of Vet-
7 erans Affairs and the Secretary of Defense from consid-
8 ering all relevant evidence, as appropriate, in creating the
9 clinical practice guideline or guidelines required under
10 subsection (a) or from ensuring that the final clinical prac-
11 tice guideline or guidelines developed under such sub-
12 section and subsequently updated, as appropriate, remain
13 applicable to the patient populations of the Department
14 of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense.

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