116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 4958

To provide for a vaccine safety public awareness campaign.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

DECEMBER 3, 2020

Mr. PORTMAN (for himself, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. THUNE, and Mr. MENENDEZ) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

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A BILL

To provide for a vaccine safety public awareness campaign.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''COVID–19 Vaccine Awareness Support Act of 2020''.

SEC. 2. VACCINE SAFETY PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services (referred to in this section as the ''Secretary''), acting through the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and in coordination with the Office of Minority Health and the Federal Office of

Rural Health Policy of the Department of Health and Human Services, and, as appropriate, with the relevant Offices of Minority Health of the Department of Health and Human Services, the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities, and the Indian Health Service, shall establish grant funding opportunities for eligible entities to carry out a national, evidence-based campaign to disseminate COVID–19 vaccination information.

(b) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—To be eligible to receive a grant under this section, an entity shall—

(1) be a State, local, Tribal, or territorial health department, an urban Indian organization (as defined in section 4 of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (25 U.S.C. 1603)), a nonprofit community-based organization, or a nonprofit faith-based organization; and

(2) agree to—

(A) work in consultation with relevant State and local health officials, health care providers, health care facilities, and other appropriate stakeholders to carry the campaign under this section; and

(B) submit to the Secretary, within 30 days of receipt of a grant, a proposed plan for use of the grant funds.

(c) USE OF FUNDS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Entities receiving a grant under this section shall use such grant funds to—

(A) increase awareness and knowledge of the safety and effectiveness of vaccines approved or authorized by the Food and Drug Administration for the prevention and control of COVID–19 and the benefit of receiving a COVID–19 vaccine;

(B) provide information on where the vaccine can be obtained; and

(C) create multilingual and culturally appropriate messaging to disseminate scientific and evidence-based information related to vaccines.

(2) DETAILS OF CAMPAIGNS.—Information disseminated by an entity receiving a grant under this section shall—

(A) be based on available scientific evidence;

(B) increase awareness and knowledge of COVID–19, including countering stigma associated with COVID–19;

(C) improve information on the availability of COVID–19 vaccines, including countering

misinformation and disinformation with evidence-based scientific rebuttals; and

(D) improve awareness and knowledge of coverage of COVID–19 vaccines.

(d) PRIORITIZATION.—In awarding grants under this section, the Secretary shall give priority to eligible entities in either urban or rural communities (or a combination of urban and rural communities) that serve vulnerable populations, including communities of color, which may include low-income, uninsured, and medically underserved individuals or populations with historically low rates of receiving vaccines.

(e) TIMING.—The Secretary shall awards the grants under this section not later than 30 days after the earlier of—

(1) the date on which the Food and Drug Administration licenses a COVID–19 vaccine under section 351 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 262); or

(2) the date on which a manufacturer begins to distribute a COVID–19 vaccine to public or private entities pursuant to an emergency use authorization under section 564 of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 360bbb–3).

(f) EVALUATION.—The Secretary shall—

(1) conduct qualitative assessments regarding the campaign under this section; and

(2) not later than one year after the date of enactment of this Act, prepare and submit to the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate and the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives an evaluation of the campaign under this section.

(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section such sums as may be necessary for fiscal year 2021.

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