II

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 4031

To amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to designate medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs as innovative therapies centers of excellence, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 9, 2026

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

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A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to designate medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs as innovative therapies centers of excellence, and for other purposes.

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 ''Innovative Therapies Centers of Excellence Act''.

SEC. 2. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS DESIGNATION OF INNOVATIVE THERAPIES CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter II of chapter 73 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

"§ 7330E. Innovative therapies centers of excellence

''(a) ESTABLISHMENT OF CENTERS.—

''(1) DESIGNATION.—The Secretary, upon the recommendation of the Under Secretary for Health, shall designate not fewer than five medical facilities of the Department as the locations for innovative therapies centers of excellence.

''(2) ESTABLISHMENT AND OPERATION.—Subject to the availability of appropriations for such purpose, the Secretary shall establish and operate innovative therapies centers of excellence at the locations designated pursuant to paragraph (1).

''(b) GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF FACILITIES.—In designating medical facilities as centers of excellence under subsection (a)(1), the Secretary, upon the recommendation of the Under Secretary for Health, shall ensure appropriate geographic distribution of such facilities.

''(c) REQUIREMENTS FOR DESIGNATION.—

''(1) HIGHEST COMPETITIVE STANDARDS.—The Secretary may not designate a medical facility as a

location for a center under subsection (a)(1) unless the peer review panel established under subsection (d) has determined under that subsection that the proposal submitted by such facility as a location for a new center under subsection (a)(1) is among those proposals that meet the highest competitive standards of scientific and clinical merit.

''(2) OTHER ELEMENTS.—The Secretary may not designate a medical facility as a location for a center under subsection (a)(1) unless the Secretary, upon the recommendation of the Under Secretary for Health, determines that the facility has, or may reasonably be anticipated to develop, each of the following:

''(A) An arrangement with—

''(i) an accredited medical school that provides education and training in innovative therapies and with which the facility is affiliated under which residents receive education and training in use of innovative therapies to treat covered conditions;

''(ii) an accredited school of psychiatry; and

''(iii) an accredited school of social work.

''(B) The ability to attract the participation of scientists who are capable of ingenuity and creativity in medical research efforts.

''(C) An advisory committee composed of veterans and appropriate medical and research representatives of the facility and of the affiliated school or schools to advise the directors of the facility and such center on policy matters pertaining to the activities of the center during the period of the operation of such center.

''(D) The capability to conduct effectively evaluations of the activities of such center.

''(E) The capability to coordinate (as part of an integrated national system) education, clinical, and research activities within all facilities with such centers.

''(F) The capability to jointly develop a consortium of providers with interest in treating covered conditions with innovative therapies at facilities of the Department without such centers in order to ensure better access to state-of-the-art diagnosis, care, and education for innovative therapies throughout the medical system of the Department.

''(G) The capability to develop a national repository in the medical system of the Department for the collection of data on health services delivered to veterans seeking innovative therapies.

''(d) PEER REVIEW PANEL.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary for Health shall establish a panel to assess the scientific and clinical merit of proposals that are submitted to the Secretary for the establishment of centers under this section.

''(2) MEMBERSHIP.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The membership of the panel established under paragraph (1) shall consist of experts in innovative therapies.

''(B) PERIOD OF SERVICE.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Members of the panel established under paragraph (1) shall serve for a period of not more than two years, except as specified in clause (ii).

''(ii) INITIAL APPOINTMENT.—Of the members first appointed to the panel established under paragraph (1), one-half shall be appointed for a period of three years and one-half shall be appointed for a

period of two years, as designated by the Under Secretary for Health at the time of appointment.

''(3) DUTIES.—The panel established under paragraph (1) shall review each proposal submitted to the panel by the Under Secretary for Health and shall submit its views on the relative scientific and clinical merit of each such proposal to the Under Secretary.

''(4) APPLICATION OF LAWS REGARDING FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEES.—The panel established under paragraph (1) shall not be subject to chapter 10 of title 5.

''(e) ANNUAL REPORT.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than two years after the date of the enactment of this section, and annually thereafter, the Under Secretary for Health shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on the activities of the centers established under subsection (a) during the period covered by the report.

''(2) ELEMENTS.—Each report required under paragraph (1) shall include—

''(A) a summary of activities carried out by the centers established under subsection (a) during such period;

''(B) an identification of key findings made at such centers during such period;

''(C) recommendations to improve the delivery of innovative therapies to veterans; and

''(D) such other matters as the Under Secretary determines relevant.

''(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be appropriated $30,000,000 for each fiscal year to support the research and education activities of the centers established under subsection (a).

''(2) ALLOCATION OF ADDITIONAL AMOUNTS.—The Under Secretary for Health shall allocate to the centers established under subsection (a) from other amounts appropriated generally for the medical services account and medical and prosthetics research account of the Department, as appropriate, such amounts as the Under Secretary determines appropriate.

''(g) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

''(1) The term 'covered condition' means any of the following:

''(A) Anxiety.

''(B) Bipolar disorder.

''(C) Chronic pain.

''(D) Depression.

''(E) Parkinson's disease.

''(F) Post-traumatic stress disorder.

''(G) Substance use disorder.

''(H) Such other conditions as may be designated by the Under Secretary for Health.

''(2) The term 'innovative therapy' means any of the following:

''(A) 3,4-Methylenedioxy-methamphetamine.

''(B) 5-Methoxy-N,N-dimethyltryptamine.

''(C) Ibogaine.

''(D) Ketamine.

''(E) Psilocybin.

''(F) Such other therapies as may be designated by the Under Secretary for Health.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 7330D the following new item:

''7330E. Innovative therapies centers of excellence.''.

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