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S. 450

[Report No. 116-_____]]

To require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program to expedite the onboarding process for new medical providers of the Department of Veterans Affairs, to reduce the duration of the hiring process for such medical providers, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 12, 2019

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

_____ (legislative day, _____), _____

Reported by _____, with an amendment and an amendment to the title

[Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the part printed in italic]

A BILL

To require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program to expedite the onboarding process for new medical providers of the Department of Veterans Affairs, to reduce the duration of the hiring process for such medical providers, 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,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Veterans Improved Ac-
3 cess and Care Act of 2019”.

4 **SEC. 2. PILOT PROGRAM ON EXPEDITING THE DEPART-**
5 **MENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PROCESS FOR**
6 **ONBOARDING NEW MEDICAL PROVIDERS.**

7 (a) **PILOT PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.**—

8 (1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary of Veterans
9 Affairs shall carry out a pilot program to assess the
10 feasibility and advisability of expediting the process
11 of the Veterans Health Administration for onboard-
12 ing new medical providers.

13 (2) **GOAL FOR PROGRAM.**—Under the pilot pro-
14 gram, the Secretary shall seek to reduce the length
15 of time it takes to onboard medical providers to no
16 more than 60 days.

17 (b) **LOCATIONS.**—

18 (1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary shall select
19 not fewer than ten medical facilities of the Depart-
20 ment of Veterans Affairs at which to carry out the
21 pilot program.

22 (2) **REGIONAL DIVERSITY.**—The medical facili-
23 ties selected under paragraph (1) shall be located in
24 regionally diverse areas, as determined by the Sec-
25 retary.

1 (3) PRIORITY.—In selecting medical facilities
2 under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall give pri-
3 ority to medical facilities facing hiring shortages of
4 licensed independent medical providers.

5 (e) ONBOARDING PROCESS DEFINED.—In this sec-
6 tion, the term “onboarding process” means the process of
7 bringing on a medical provider applicant after the medical
8 provider is offered a tentative position, including certifi-
9 cation of credentialing, background investigation, assess-
10 ment of health status, and such other actions as are nec-
11 essary for starting employment.

12 **SEC. 3. STRATEGY TO REDUCE DURATION OF HIRING**
13 **PROCESS OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AF-**
14 **FAIRS FOR LICENSED PROFESSIONAL MED-**
15 **ICAL PROVIDERS.**

16 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the
17 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Vet-
18 erans Affairs shall submit to Congress a strategy to reduce
19 the duration of the hiring process of the Department of
20 Veterans Affairs for licensed professional medical pro-
21 viders by half.

22 (b) EXPEDITED CERTIFICATION.—The strategy sub-
23 mitted under subsection (a) shall describe how the overall
24 certification of credentials process of the Department for
25 licensed professional medical providers can be expedited.

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 *This Act may be cited as the “Veterans Improved Ac-*
3 *cess and Care Act of 2020”.*

4 **SEC. 2. EXPANSION OF QUARTERLY UPDATE OF INFORMA-**
5 **TION ON STAFFING AND VACANCIES AT FA-**
6 **CILITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS**
7 **AFFAIRS TO INCLUDE INFORMATION ON DU-**
8 **RATION OF HIRING PROCESS.**

9 *(a) QUARTERLY UPDATE.—Subsection (a)(1) of sec-*
10 *tion 505 of the VA MISSION Act of 2018 (Public Law 115–*
11 *182; 38 U.S.C. 301 note) is amended by adding at the end*
12 *the following new subparagraph:*

13 *“(E) Beginning with any update under*
14 *paragraph (3) on or after the date of the enact-*
15 *ment of the Veterans Improved Access and Care*
16 *Act of 2020, the following:*

17 *“(i) For employees appointed under*
18 *paragraphs (1) and (3) of section 7401 of*
19 *title 38, United States Code, the number of*
20 *employees for which the duration of the*
21 *process from validation of vacancy to re-*
22 *ceipt of official offer and notification of ac-*
23 *tual start date exceeds the metrics laid out*
24 *in the Time to Hire Model of the Veterans*
25 *Health Administration, or successor model.*

1 “(ii) *The percentage of employees who*
2 *are described in clause (i) compared to all*
3 *employees appointed under paragraphs (1)*
4 *and (3) of section 7401 of such title during*
5 *the same period.*

6 “(iii) *The average number of days po-*
7 *tential hires or new hires appointed under*
8 *paragraphs (1) and (3) of section 7401 of*
9 *such title spent in each phase of the Time*
10 *to Hire Model, or successor model.”.*

11 **(b) REDUCTION IN FREQUENCY OF INSPECTOR GEN-**
12 **ERAL REVIEWS.**—*Subsection (a)(5) of such section is*
13 *amended by striking “a semi-annual basis” and inserting*
14 *“an annual basis”.*

15 **(c) ANNUAL REPORT.**—*Subsection (b) of such section*
16 *is amended, in the first sentence, by adding before the pe-*
17 *riod at the end the following: “and to improve the onboard*
18 *timeline for facilities for which the duration of the*
19 *onboarding process exceeds the metrics laid out in the Time*
20 *to Hire Model of the Veterans Health Administration, or*
21 *successor model”.*

Amend the title so as to read: “A bill to amend the VA MISSION Act of 2018 to expand the quarterly update of information on staffing and vacancies at facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.”.