

104TH CONGRESS
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S. 425

To amend title 38, United States Code, to require the establishment in the Department of Veterans Affairs of mental illness research, education, and clinical centers, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 15 (legislative day, JANUARY 30), 1995

Mr. ROCKEFELLER (for himself, Mr. AKAKA, Mr. CAMPBELL, Mr. DORNAN, and Mr. WELLSTONE) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to require the establishment in the Department of Veterans Affairs of mental illness research, education, and clinical centers, 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. MENTAL ILLNESS RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND**
4 **CLINICAL CENTERS.**

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

1 **“§ 7319. Mental illness research, education, and clini-**
2 **cal centers**

3 “(a) The purpose of this section is to improve the
4 provision of health-care services and related counseling
5 services to eligible veterans suffering from mental illness,
6 especially mental illness related to service-related condi-
7 tions, through research (including research on improving
8 mental health service facilities of the Department and on
9 improving the delivery of mental health services by the De-
10 partment), education and training of personnel, and the
11 development of improved models and systems for the fur-
12 nishing of mental health services by the Department.

13 “(b)(1) In order to carry out the purpose of this sec-
14 tion, the Secretary, upon the recommendation of the
15 Under Secretary for Health and pursuant to the provi-
16 sions of this subsection, shall—

17 “(A) designate not more than five health-care
18 facilities of the Department as the locations for a
19 center of research on mental health services, on the
20 use by the Department of specific models for fur-
21 nishing such services, on education and training, and
22 on the development and implementation of innova-
23 tive clinical activities and systems of care with re-
24 spect to the delivery of such services by the Depart-
25 ment; and

1 “(B) subject to the appropriation of funds for
2 such purpose, establish and operate such centers at
3 such locations in accordance with this section.

4 “(2) The Secretary shall designate at least one facil-
5 ity under paragraph (1) not later than January 1, 1996.

6 “(3) The Secretary shall, upon the recommendation
7 of the Under Secretary for Health, ensure that the facili-
8 ties designated for centers under paragraph (1) are lo-
9 cated in various geographic regions.

10 “(4) The Secretary may not designate any health-
11 care facility as a location for a center under paragraph
12 (1) unless—

13 “(A) the peer review panel established under
14 paragraph (5) has determined under that paragraph
15 that the proposal submitted by such facility as a lo-
16 cation for a new center under this subsection is
17 among those proposals which have met the highest
18 competitive standards of scientific and clinical merit;
19 and

20 “(B) the Secretary, upon the recommendation
21 of the Under Secretary for Health, determines that
22 the facility has developed (or may reasonably be an-
23 ticipated to develop)—

24 “(i) an arrangement with an accredited
25 medical school which provides education and

1 training in psychiatry and with which the facil-
2 ity is affiliated under which arrangement resi-
3 dents receive education and training in psychia-
4 try through regular rotation through the facility
5 so as to provide such residents with training in
6 the diagnosis and treatment of mental illness;

7 “(ii) an arrangement with an accredited
8 graduate school of psychology under which ar-
9 rangement students receive education and train-
10 ing in clinical, counseling, or professional psy-
11 chology through regular rotation through the
12 facility so as to provide such students with
13 training in the diagnosis and treatment of men-
14 tal illness;

15 “(iii) an arrangement under which nursing,
16 social work, or allied health personnel receive
17 training and education in mental health care
18 through regular rotation through the facility;

19 “(iv) the ability to attract scientists who
20 have demonstrated creativity and achievement
21 in research—

22 “(I) into the evaluation of innovative
23 approaches to the design of mental health
24 services; or

1 “(II) into the causes, prevention, and
2 treatment of mental illness;

3 “(v) a policymaking advisory committee
4 composed of appropriate mental health-care and
5 research personnel of the facility and of the af-
6 filiated school or schools to advise the directors
7 of the facility and the center on policy matters
8 pertaining to the activities of the center during
9 the period of the operation of the center; and

10 “(vi) the capability to evaluate effectively
11 the activities of the center, including activities
12 relating to the evaluation of specific efforts to
13 improve the quality and effectiveness of mental
14 health services provided by the Department at
15 or through individual facilities.

16 “(5)(A) In order to provide advice to assist the Under
17 Secretary for Health and the Secretary to carry out their
18 responsibilities under this section, the official within the
19 Central Office of the Veterans Health Administration re-
20 sponsible for mental health and behavioral sciences mat-
21 ters shall establish a panel to assess the scientific and clin-
22 ical merit of proposals that are submitted to the Secretary
23 for the establishment of new centers under this subsection.

24 “(B) The membership of the panel shall consist of
25 experts in the fields of mental health research, education

1 and training, and clinical care. Members of the panel shall
2 serve as consultants to the Department for a period of
3 no longer than six months.

4 “(C) The panel shall review each proposal submitted
5 to the panel by the official referred to in subparagraph
6 (A) and shall submit its views on the relative scientific
7 and clinical merit of each such proposal to that official.

8 “(D) The panel shall not be subject to the Federal
9 Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.).

10 “(c) Clinical and scientific investigation activities at
11 each center may compete for the award of funding from
12 amounts appropriated for the Department of Veterans Af-
13 fairs medical and prosthetics research account and shall
14 receive priority in the award of funding from such account
15 insofar as funds are awarded to projects and activities re-
16 lating to mental illness.

17 “(d) The Under Secretary for Health shall ensure
18 that at least three centers designated under subsection
19 (b)(1)(A) emphasize research into means of improving the
20 quality of care for veterans suffering from mental illness
21 through the development of community-based alternatives
22 to institutional treatment for such illness.

23 “(e) The Under Secretary for Health shall ensure
24 that useful information produced by the research, edu-
25 cation and training, and clinical activities of the centers

1 established under subsection (b)(1) is disseminated
2 throughout the Veterans Health Administration through
3 publications and through programs of continuing medical
4 and related education provided through regional medical
5 education centers under subchapter VI of chapter 74 of
6 this title and through other means.

7 “(f) The official within the Central Office of the Vet-
8 erans Health Administration responsible for mental health
9 and behavioral sciences matters shall be responsible for
10 supervising the operation of the centers established pursu-
11 ant to subsection (b)(1).

12 “(g)(1) There are authorized to be appropriated for
13 the Department of Veterans Affairs for the basic support
14 of the research and education and training activities of
15 the centers established pursuant to subsection (b)(1) the
16 following:

17 “(A) \$3,125,000 for fiscal year 1996.

18 “(B) \$6,250,000 for each of fiscal years 1997
19 through 1999.

20 “(2) In addition to the funds available under the au-
21 thorization of appropriations in paragraph (1), the Under
22 Secretary for Health shall allocate to such centers from
23 other funds appropriated generally for the Department of
24 Veterans Affairs medical care account and the Depart-
25 ment of Veterans Affairs medical and prosthetics research

1 account such amounts as the Under Secretary for Health
 2 determines appropriate in order to carry out the purposes
 3 of this section.”.

4 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections
 5 at the beginning of chapter 73 of such title is amended
 6 by adding at the end of the matter relating to subchapter
 7 II the following:

“7319. Mental illness research, education, and clinical centers.”.

8 (c) REPORTS.—Not later than February 1 of each of
 9 1997, 1998, and 1999, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs
 10 shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of
 11 the Senate and House of Representatives a report on the
 12 status and activities during the previous fiscal year of the
 13 mental illness, research, education, and clinical centers es-
 14 tablished pursuant to section 7319 of title 38, United
 15 States Code (as added by subsection (a)). Each such re-
 16 port shall contain the following:

17 (1) A description of—

18 (A) the activities carried out at each center
 19 and the funding provided for such activities;

20 (B) the advances made at each center in
 21 research, education and training, and clinical
 22 activities relating to mental illness in veterans;
 23 and

24 (C) the actions taken by the Under Sec-
 25 retary for Health pursuant to subsection (d) of

1 such section (as so added) to disseminate useful
2 information derived from such activities
3 throughout the Veterans Health Administra-
4 tion.

5 (2) The Secretary's evaluations of the effective-
6 ness of the centers in fulfilling the purposes of the
7 centers.

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