

107TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. R. 4836

To amend title 38, United States Code, to establish policies for any requirement by the Department of Veterans Affairs that veterans be required to split their medications as a cost-saving measure.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 23, 2002

Mr. CARDIN introduced the following bill; which was referred to the
Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to establish policies for any requirement by the Department of Veterans Affairs that veterans be required to split their medications as a cost-saving measure.

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 “Veterans Safe Medica-
5 tions Act.”.

1 **SEC. 2. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICY ON**
2 **TABLET SPLITTING OF MEDICATIONS.**

3 (a) **REQUIRED POLICY.**—Section 1712 of title 38,
4 United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the
5 following new subsection:

6 “(f)(1) The Secretary shall prescribe a policy for use
7 by health care providers and pharmacies of the Depart-
8 ment of the practice of prescribing or dispensing tablet
9 medication in a form that requires tablet splitting by the
10 patient. Such policy shall require that a Department phar-
11 macy may provide a medication to a veteran in tablet form
12 in a dosage so as to require tablet splitting only if each
13 of the conditions specified in paragraph (2) is met. Noth-
14 ing in this subsection shall be construed so as to encourage
15 or require prescribing or dispensing medicine in a form
16 that requires tablet splitting.

17 “(2) The conditions referred to in paragraph (1) are
18 the following:

19 “(A) A health care professional has determined
20 that the patient has the mental and physical ability
21 to properly use a table splitter.

22 “(B) The tablets dispensed are in a form re-
23 ferred to as ‘scored’.

24 “(C) The tablets are not sustained-release tab-
25 lets.

1 “(D) The tablets are intended to be taken every
2 48 hours or more frequently.

3 “(E) A tablet splitter that the Secretary has de-
4 termined to be effective has been provided to the pa-
5 tient.

6 “(3) If the prescriber of a medication determines that
7 a particular patient should not be required to use tablet
8 splitting, the prescriber may specify that medication for
9 that patient prescribed by that prescriber be dispensed in
10 a form that does not require tablet splitting. Any such
11 specification shall be honored by Department pharmacies.

12 “(4) For patients who demonstrate the ability to per-
13 form tablet splitting, the Secretary shall provide appro-
14 priate instruction in written form (as determined by the
15 Secretary). Such instruction shall include informing the
16 patient to split a tablet immediately before use so that
17 the remaining portion is not exposed for a period greater
18 than 48 hours.

19 “(5) The Secretary shall require that any adverse
20 events that are directly attributable to the practice of
21 splitting tablets be reported to the Under Secretary for
22 Health on a monthly basis.

23 “(6) The Under Secretary for Health shall establish
24 a national formulary of medications that have been ap-
25 proved for tablet splitting. The list of medications in the

1 formulary shall be made available, upon request, to pa-
2 tients and their families. The Under Secretary shall review
3 the formulary annually to determine if patient or financial
4 outcomes through the use of tablet splitting validate con-
5 tinuation of specific medications on the formulary.

6 “(7) In this subsection, the term ‘tablet splitting’
7 means, in the case of a medication that is dispensed in
8 a tablet form in a dosage that is twice the prescribed dos-
9 age, action by the patient to split the tablet in half for
10 consumption.”.

11 (b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The policy required by the
12 amendment made by subsection (a) shall be prescribed not
13 later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this
14 Act.

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