

107TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. R. 4852

To amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the geographic allocation of funds made available to the Department of Veterans Affairs for medical care on a basis that better reflects the veterans population of different regions of the country and that accounts for significant shifts in the veterans populations in those regions, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 23, 2002

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

A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the geographic allocation of funds made available to the Department of Veterans Affairs for medical care on a basis that better reflects the veterans population of different regions of the country and that accounts for significant shifts in the veterans populations in those regions, 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 Medical Care
3 Improvement and Equity Act of 2002”.

4 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

5 Congress makes the following findings:

6 (1) The current Veterans Equitable Resource
7 Allocation (VERA) system fails to adequately dis-
8 tribute Department of Veterans Affairs medical care
9 resources to where veterans actually reside in ac-
10 cordance with section 429 of Public Law 104–204
11 (110 Stat. 2929).

12 (2) The number of veterans seeking medical
13 care in the Department of Veterans Affairs health
14 care system is far outstripping the ability of that
15 system to provide care to all veterans in need.

16 (3) There are currently thousands of Category
17 1 through 6 veterans with service-connected disabil-
18 ities who are on waiting lists to enroll in the Depart-
19 ment of Veterans Affairs health care system.

20 (4) There are Category 7 veterans with serious
21 health care needs who are enrolled or awaiting en-
22 rollment in the Department of Veterans Affairs
23 health care system.

1 **SEC. 3. REVISION TO GEOGRAPHIC ALLOCATION METHOD**
2 **FOR FUNDS APPROPRIATED FOR VETERANS**
3 **MEDICAL CARE.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—(1) In applying the VERA system
5 to the allocation of VA medical care funds for any fiscal
6 year among the geographic service areas of the Veterans
7 Health Administration, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs
8 shall make such allocation in accordance with this section.
9 In determining the number of veterans served by any such
10 geographic service area for purposes of such allocations,
11 the Secretary shall include all veterans who are enrolled
12 in the Department of Veterans Affairs health care system
13 and all veterans who have contacted the Department of
14 Veterans Affairs and are awaiting enrollment in the De-
15 partment of Veterans Affairs health care system.

16 (2) Data used in determining the number of veterans
17 enrolled or awaiting enrollment for purposes of this section
18 shall be as current as possible as of the beginning of the
19 fiscal year and shall be no more than six months old.

20 (b) MID-YEAR REVIEW.—The Secretary of Veterans
21 Affairs shall conduct a mid-year review of the allocations
22 under subsection (a) for any fiscal year for the purpose
23 of making adjustments based upon changes in the number
24 of veterans enrolled or awaiting enrollment in the Depart-
25 ment of Veterans Affairs health care system. Such review
26 shall be completed in time to make any adjustments in

1 such allocations effective for the two most recent quarters
2 of the fiscal year, and the Secretary shall make such ad-
3 justments to achieve equity of access to those veterans as
4 soon as practicable upon completion of such mid-year re-
5 view. Data used for such review shall be as current as
6 possible as of the time of the mid-year review and shall
7 be no more than six months old.

8 (c) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this section:

9 (1) The term “VA medical care funds” means
10 funds appropriated for any fiscal year to the Depart-
11 ment of Veterans Affairs for medical care.

12 (2) The term “VERA system” means the Vet-
13 erans Equitable Resource Allocation system estab-
14 lished pursuant to section 429 of Public Law 104–
15 204 (110 Stat. 2929).

16 **SEC. 4. PRIORITIZATION FOR ENROLLMENT AND CARE.**

17 The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall provide for
18 priority in the enrollment of veterans in the Department
19 of Veterans Affairs health care system, and in the fur-
20 nishing of care and services through that system, in ac-
21 cordance with the following categories, with priority in the
22 order listed:

23 (1) Any veteran with an emergent or urgent
24 care need.

1 (2) Any veteran described in any of paragraphs
2 (1) through (6) of section 1705(a) of title 38,
3 United States Code, and any veteran described in
4 paragraph (7) of such section who has a serious
5 health care need that if not treated would place the
6 veteran's life in jeopardy.

7 (3) Any veteran not described in paragraph (1)
8 or (2).

9 **SEC. 5. EFFECTIVE DATE.**

10 This Act shall take effect upon enactment and shall
11 apply with respect to funds appropriated for fiscal year
12 2003 and thereafter.

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