### 109TH CONGRESS 1ST SESSION H.R.922

To improve treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder for veterans of service in Afghanistan and Iraq and the war on terrorism.

#### IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

#### FEBRUARY 17, 2005

Mr. FORD introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on Armed Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

## A BILL

- To improve treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder for veterans of service in Afghanistan and Iraq and the war on terrorism.
  - 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 Mental5 Health Services Enhancement Act of 2005".

1	SEC. 2. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TREATMENT
2	OF POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER IN
3	VETERANS.
4	(a) Enhanced Treatment Capacity.—
5	(1) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—
6	There is authorized to be appropriated to the Sec-
7	retary of Veterans Affairs for "Medical Care" the
8	amount of $$100,000,000$ for the employment of ad-
9	ditional psychiatrists and other mental health serv-
10	ices specialists at Department of Veterans Affairs
11	medical centers and outpatient facilities specializing
12	in the diagnosis and treatment of post-traumatic
13	stress disorder.
14	(2) Allocation of funds.—Funds made
15	available pursuant to the authorization of appropria-
16	tions in paragraph (1) shall, to the extent funds are
17	available for such purpose, be used to employ at
18	least one psychiatrist and a complementary clinical
19	team at each medical center of the Department of

18 least one psychiatrist and a complementary clinical 19 team at each medical center of the Department of 20 Veterans Affairs in order to conduct a specialized 21 program for the diagnosis and treatment of post-22 traumatic stress disorder and to employ additional 23 mental health services specialists at the medical cen-24 ter.

25 (b) OUTREACH AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL.—

(1) PROGRAM.—The Secretary of Veterans Af-1 2 fairs shall, within the authorities of the Secretary 3 under title 38, United States Code, carry out a pro-4 gram to provide outreach at the community level to 5 veterans who participated in Operation Iraqi Free-6 dom or Operation Enduring Freedom and who are 7 or may be suffering from post-traumatic stress dis-8 order.

9 (2) PROGRAM SITES.—The program shall be
10 carried out on a nationwide basis through facilities
11 of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(3) PROGRAM CONTENT.—The program shall
provide for individualized case management to be
conducted on a one-on-one basis, counseling, education, and group therapy to help participants cope
with post-traumatic stress disorder. The program—
(A) shall emphasize early identification of

veterans who may be experiencing symptoms ofpost-traumatic stress disorder; and

20 (B) shall include group-oriented, peer-to-21 peer settings for treatment.

(4) PROGRAM MODEL.—The Secretary shall establish and carry out the program under this subsection using as a model the program for the treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder conducted at

the Department of Veterans Affairs medical center
 in Memphis, Tennessee.

# 3 SEC. 3. ARMED FORCES REVIEW OF MENTAL HEALTH PRO4 GRAMS.

5 (a) REVIEW OF MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS.—The Secretary of each military department shall conduct a 6 7 comprehensive review of the mental health care programs 8 of the Armed Forces under the jurisdiction of that Sec-9 retary in order to determine ways to improve the efficacy 10 of such care, including a review of joint Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs clinical 11 guidelines to ensure a seamless delivery of care during 12 13 transitions from active duty or reserve status to civilian life. 14

(b) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—The Secretary of Defense shall submit to Congress a report setting forth the
results of each review under subsection (a). The report
shall be submitted not later than 90 days after the date
of the enactment of this Act.

#### 20 SEC. 4. TRANSITION TO VETERANS HEALTH CARE.

The Secretary of each military department shall take special care in providing for as seamless a transition as possible from Department of Defense health care services to Department of Veterans Affairs health care services in the case of members of the Armed Forces who are being discharged or separated from active duty and who have
 been identified by the Secretary as having been exposed
 to combat or otherwise as being at particular risk for post traumatic stress disorder.

#### 5 SEC. 5. PRIVACY SAFEGUARDS.

6 The Secretary of each military department and the 7 Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall assess privacy and patient confidentiality standards and practices of their re-8 9 spective departments to ensure that those standards and practices are adequate to protect the privacy of patients, 10 11 particularly in the case of patients seeking treatment for 12 post-traumatic stress disorder. Each of those Secretaries shall also assess and identify other factors that may deter 13 members of the Armed Forces and veterans from seeking 14 15 treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder.

0