

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1527

To amend title 38, United States Code, to allow highly rural veterans enrolled in the health system of the Department of Veterans Affairs to receive covered health services through providers other than those of the Department, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 14, 2007

Mr. MORAN of Kansas (for himself and Mr. LATHAM) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to allow highly rural veterans enrolled in the health system of the Department of Veterans Affairs to receive covered health services through providers other than those of the Department, 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. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Rural Veterans Access
5 to Care Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. ENHANCED CONTRACT CARE AUTHORITY FOR**
2 **HEALTH CARE NEEDS OF VETERANS IN HIGH-**
3 **LY RURAL AREAS.**

4 (a) CONTRACT CARE FOR HIGHLY RURAL VET-
5 ERANS.—Section 1703 of title 38, United States Code, is
6 amended by adding at the end the following new sub-
7 section:

8 “(e)(1) A highly rural veteran who is enrolled in the
9 system of patient enrollment established under section
10 1705(a) of this title may elect to receive covered health
11 services for which such veteran is eligible through a non-
12 Department health-care provider. Such an election shall
13 be made by submission to the Secretary of an application
14 in accordance with such regulations as the Secretary pre-
15 scribes. The Secretary shall authorize such services to be
16 furnished to such veteran pursuant to contracting with
17 such a provider to furnish such services to such veteran.

18 “(2) For purposes of this subsection, a highly rural
19 veteran is one who—

20 “(A) resides in a location that is—

21 “(I) more than 60 miles driving distance
22 from the nearest Department health-care facil-
23 ity providing primary care services, if the vet-
24 eran is seeking such services;

25 “(ii) more than 120 miles driving distance
26 from the nearest Department health-care facil-

1 ity providing acute hospital care, if the veteran
2 is seeking such care; or

3 “(iii) more than 240 miles driving distance
4 from the nearest Department health-care facil-
5 ity providing tertiary care, if the veteran is
6 seeking such care; or

7 “(B) in the case of a veteran who resides in a
8 location less than the distance indicated in clause
9 (i), (ii), or (iii) of subparagraph (A), as applicable,
10 experiences such hardship or other difficulties in
11 travel to the nearest appropriate Department health-
12 care facility that such travel is not in the best inter-
13 est of the veteran, as determined by the Secretary
14 pursuant to regulations prescribed for purposes of
15 this subsection.

16 “(3) For purposes of this subsection, a covered health
17 service is any hospital care, medical service, rehabilitative
18 service, or preventative health service authorized to be pro-
19 vided by the Secretary under this chapter or any other
20 provision of law.

21 “(4) For purposes of this subsection, a health-care
22 provider is any qualified entity or individual furnishing a
23 covered health service.

24 “(5) In meeting the requirements of this subsection,
25 the Secretary shall—

1 veteran. Such drugs and medicines shall be furnished in
2 the same manner and subject to the same conditions as
3 apply to a prescription written by a Department physi-
4 cian.”.

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