

110<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
2<sup>D</sup> SESSION

# H. R. 6122

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to develop and implement a comprehensive policy on the management of pain experienced by veterans enrolled for health care services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 21, 2008

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota (for himself, Mr. FILNER, Mr. LOEBSACK, Mr. HALL of New York, Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas, Mrs. CAPPS, Mr. HINCHEY, Mr. MICHAUD, Mr. KAGEN, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. ANDREWS, Mr. HARE, Mr. OBERSTAR, and Mr. RAMSTAD) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

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## A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to develop and implement a comprehensive policy on the management of pain experienced by veterans enrolled for health care services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs, 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 “Veterans Pain Care  
5       Act of 2008”.

1 **SEC. 2. COMPREHENSIVE POLICY ON PAIN MANAGEMENT.**

2 (a) **COMPREHENSIVE POLICY REQUIRED.**—Not later  
3 than October 1, 2008, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs  
4 shall develop and implement a comprehensive policy on the  
5 management of pain experienced by veterans enrolled for  
6 health care services provided by the Department of Vet-  
7 erans Affairs.

8 (b) **SCOPE OF POLICY.**—The policy required by sub-  
9 section (a) shall cover each of the following:

10 (1) The departmentwide management of acute  
11 and chronic pain experienced by veterans.

12 (2) The standard of care for pain management  
13 to be used throughout the Department.

14 (3) The consistent application of pain assess-  
15 ments to be used throughout the Department.

16 (4) The assurance of prompt and appropriate  
17 pain care treatment and management by the Depart-  
18 ment, systemwide, when medically necessary.

19 (5) The Department's program of research re-  
20 lated to acute and chronic pain suffered by veterans,  
21 including pain attributable to central and peripheral  
22 nervous system damage characteristic of injuries in-  
23 curred in modern warfare.

24 (6) The Department's program of pain care  
25 education and training for health care personnel of  
26 the Department.

1           (7) The Department's program of patient edu-  
2           cation for veterans suffering from acute or chronic  
3           pain and their families.

4           (c) UPDATES.—The Secretary shall revise the policy  
5           developed under subsection (a) on a periodic basis in ac-  
6           cordance with experience and evolving best practice guide-  
7           lines.

8           (d) CONSULTATION.—The Secretary shall develop the  
9           policy developed under subsection (a), and revise such pol-  
10          icy under subsection (c), in consultation with veterans  
11          service organizations and other organizations with exper-  
12          tise in the assessment, diagnosis, treatment, and manage-  
13          ment of pain.

14          (e) ANNUAL REPORT.—

15               (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days  
16               after the date of the completion and initial imple-  
17               mentation of the policy under subsection (a) and on  
18               October 1 of every fiscal year thereafter through fis-  
19               cal year 2018, the Secretary shall submit to the  
20               Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and  
21               the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of  
22               Representatives a report on the implementation of  
23               the policy developed under subsection (a).

24               (2) CONTENTS.—The report required by para-  
25               graph (1) shall include the following:

1 (A) A description of the policy developed  
2 and implemented under subsection (a) and any  
3 revisions to such policy under subsection (c).

4 (B) A description of the performance  
5 measures used to determine the effectiveness of  
6 such policy in improving pain care for veterans  
7 systemwide.

8 (C) An assessment of the adequacy of the  
9 Department's pain management services based  
10 on a survey of patients managed in Department  
11 clinics.

12 (D) An assessment of the Department's re-  
13 search programs relevant to the treatment of  
14 the types of acute and chronic pain suffered by  
15 veterans.

16 (E) An assessment of the training provided  
17 to Department health care personnel with re-  
18 spect to the diagnosis, treatment, and manage-  
19 ment of acute and chronic pain.

20 (F) An assessment of the Department's  
21 pain care related patient education programs.

22 (f) VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATION DEFINED.—  
23 In this section, the term “veterans service organization”  
24 means any organization recognized by the Secretary for

- 1 the representation of veterans under section 5902 of title
- 2 38, United States Code.

