

114TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1294

To require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to ensure that the South Texas Veterans Affairs Health Care Center in Harlingen, Texas, includes a full-service Department of Veterans Affairs inpatient health care facility.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 4, 2015

Mr. HINOJOSA (for himself, Mr. VELA, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. CUELLAR, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, and Ms. JACKSON LEE) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to ensure that the South Texas Veterans Affairs Health Care Center in Harlingen, Texas, includes a full-service Department of Veterans Affairs inpatient health care facility.

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 “Meeting the Inpatient
5 Health Care Needs of Far South Texas Veterans Act of
6 2015”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress makes the following findings:

3 (1) The current and future health care needs of
4 veterans residing in the Far South Texas area are
5 not being fully met by the Department of Veterans
6 Affairs.

7 (2) The Department of Veterans Affairs esti-
8 mates that more than 117,000 veterans reside in
9 Far South Texas.

10 (3) In its Capital Asset Realignment for En-
11 hanced Services study, the Department of Veterans
12 Affairs found that fewer than 3 percent of its enroll-
13 ees in the Valley-Coastal Bend Market of Veterans
14 Integrated Service Network 17 reside within its
15 acute hospital access standards.

16 (4) Travel times for veterans from the market
17 referred to in paragraph (3) can exceed six hours
18 from their residences to the nearest Department of
19 Veterans Affairs hospital for acute inpatient health
20 care.

21 (5) Even with the significant travel times, vet-
22 erans from Far South Texas demonstrate a high de-
23 mand for health care services from the Department
24 of Veterans Affairs.

25 (6) Current deployments involving members of
26 the Texas National Guard and other members of the

1 reserve components of the Armed Forces who reside
2 in Texas will continue to increase demand for med-
3 ical services provided by the Department of Veterans
4 Affairs.

5 **SEC. 3. INPATIENT HEALTH CARE AT THE SOUTH TEXAS**
6 **VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE CENTER.**

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs
8 shall ensure that the South Texas Veterans Affairs Health
9 Care Center in Harlingen, Texas, includes a full-service
10 Department of Veterans Affairs inpatient health care fa-
11 cility and, if necessary, shall modify the existing facility
12 to meet this requirement.

13 (b) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date
14 of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit
15 to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and
16 the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Rep-
17 resentatives a report outlining the specific actions the Sec-
18 retary plans to take to satisfy the requirements in sub-
19 section (a), including a detailed estimate of the cost of
20 such actions, if any, and the time necessary for completion
21 of any modification required by such subsection.

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