

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 4900

To amend the Public Health Service Act to establish a national telehealth program, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 29, 2019

Mr. DAVID P. ROE of Tennessee (for himself and Mr. KUSTOFF of Tennessee) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, 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 amend the Public Health Service Act to establish a national telehealth program, 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 “Telehealth Across
5 State Lines Act of 2019”.

1 **SEC. 2. NATIONAL TELEHEALTH PROGRAM.**

2 Subpart I of part D of title III of the Public Health
3 Service Act (42 U.S.C. 254b et seq.) is amended by adding
4 at the end the following:

5 **“SEC. 330N. NATIONAL TELEHEALTH PROGRAM.**

6 “(a) UNIFORM NATIONAL BEST PRACTICES.—

7 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall, in con-
8 sultation with a range of stakeholders including the
9 entities listed in paragraph (3), issue guidance on
10 uniform best practices for the provision of telehealth
11 across State lines.

12 “(2) OBJECTIVE.—The objective of the best
13 practices issued under paragraph (1) shall be to, not
14 later than 5 years after the date of enactment of
15 this section, provide high-quality telehealth in rural
16 areas across the United States.

17 “(3) CONSULTATION.—The entities listed in
18 this paragraph include—

19 “(A) technology experts;

20 “(B) data security experts;

21 “(C) primary care providers;

22 “(D) specialist providers;

23 “(E) mental health providers;

24 “(F) academic medical centers;

1 “(G) Federally qualified health centers, as
2 defined in section 1861(aa) of the Social Secu-
3 rity Act;

4 “(H) State, local, or tribal health depart-
5 ments;

6 “(I) critical access hospitals; and

7 “(J) any Federal agency with expertise in
8 the provision of telecommunications or tele-
9 health.

10 “(4) REPORTS.—The Secretary shall, not less
11 than once every year beginning 1 year after the date
12 of enactment of this section and ending on the date
13 on which the guidance under paragraph (1) is
14 issued, report to the Committee on Health, Edu-
15 cation, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate and the
16 Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House
17 of Representatives on the progress of such guidance.

18 “(b) GRANT PROGRAM.—

19 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall for
20 each of fiscal years 2020 through 2024 award
21 grants to eligible entities described in paragraph (2)
22 for the expansion of telehealth programs to rural
23 areas.

24 “(2) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—To be eligible to re-
25 ceive a grant under this subsection, an entity shall—

1 “(A) demonstrate that it is operating, on
2 the date on which the entity submits an appli-
3 cation under subparagraph (B), an effective
4 telehealth program (as determined in accord-
5 ance with criteria established by the Secretary);
6 and

7 “(B) submit an application to the Sec-
8 retary at such time, in such manner, and con-
9 taining such information as the Secretary may
10 reasonably require, including a plan to expand
11 the telehealth program operated by the entity to
12 rural areas.

13 “(3) STUDY.—Not later than 3 years after the
14 date of enactment of this section, the Secretary
15 shall—

16 “(A) complete a study on the grant pro-
17 gram under this subsection, including the suc-
18 cesses and challenges of the program, lessons
19 the Secretary has learned with respect to the
20 program, and best practices for telehealth pro-
21 grams; and

22 “(B) submit a report on such study to the
23 Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and
24 Pensions of the Senate and the Committee on

1 Energy and Commerce of the House of Rep-
2 resentatives.

3 “(4) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

4 There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out
5 this subsection, \$20,000,000 for each of fiscal years
6 2020 through 2024.

7 “(c) DEFINITION OF RURAL AREA.—In this section,
8 the term ‘rural area’ has the meaning given the term in
9 section 330J(e).”.

10 **SEC. 3. CENTER FOR MEDICARE AND MEDICAID INNOVA-**
11 **TION (CMMI) MODEL TO INCENTIVIZE THE**
12 **ADOPTION OF TELEHEALTH IN ORDER TO IN-**
13 **CREASE ACCESS TO CARE IN RURAL AREAS.**

14 Section 1115A(b)(2)(B) of the Social Security Act
15 (42 U.S.C. 1395a(b)(2)(B)) is amended by adding at the
16 end the following new clause:

17 “(xxviii) Providing incentives under
18 title XVIII to encourage the adoption of
19 telehealth in order to increase access to
20 care in rural areas.”.

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