

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 8147

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to expand an existing pilot program, and to establish a new pilot program, related to complementary and integrative health services for veterans.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 1, 2020

Mr. LAMB (for himself and Mr. FITZPATRICK) introduced the following bill;
which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to expand an existing pilot program, and to establish a new pilot program, related to complementary and integrative health services for veterans.

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 “Testing, Researching,
5 and Expanding Alternative Treatments Act” or the
6 “TREAT Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. EXPANSION OF CERTAIN COMPLEMENTARY AND IN-**
2 **TEGRATIVE HEALTH SERVICES.**

3 (a) **PLAN REQUIRED.**—Not later than 180 days after
4 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of
5 Veterans Affairs shall develop a plan to expand the pilot
6 program under section 933 of the Jason Simeakoski Me-
7 morial and Promise Act (title IX of Public Law 114–198;
8 38 U.S.C. 1701 note).

9 (b) **ASSESSMENT; ELEMENTS.**—The plan under sub-
10 section (a) shall include provisions for assessing the imple-
11 mentation of the plan and the effectiveness of services and
12 programs described in subsection (f) of that section 933,
13 including—

14 (1) the use and efficacy of complementary and
15 integrative health services delivered through the pilot
16 program for addressing mental health, pain manage-
17 ment, and treatment of chronic illness;

18 (2) the outreach conducted by the Secretary to
19 inform veterans and community organizations of
20 such services; and

21 (3) the experiences of veterans who received
22 such services.

23 (c) **TREATMENTS DESCRIBED.**—Complementary and
24 integrative health treatments described in this subsection
25 shall consist of the following:

26 (1) Yoga.

1 (2) Meditation.

2 (3) Acupuncture.

3 (4) Chiropractic care.

4 (5) Other treatments that show sufficient evi-
5 dence of efficacy at treating mental or physical
6 health conditions, as determined by the Secretary.

7 (d) IMPLEMENTATION.—Not later than 270 days
8 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary
9 shall implement the plan under subsection (a).

10 (e) REPORT.—Not later than two years after the date
11 of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit
12 to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and
13 House of Representatives a report on activities carried out
14 under this section, including—

15 (1) the assessment under subsection (b);

16 (2) implementation under subsection (d); and

17 (3) such recommendations regarding the fur-
18 nishing of complementary and integrative health
19 treatments described in subsection (c) the Secretary
20 determines appropriate.

1 **SEC. 3. PILOT PROGRAM TO PROVIDE VETERANS ACCESS**
2 **TO COMPLEMENTARY AND INTEGRATIVE**
3 **HEALTH SERVICES THROUGH ANIMAL THER-**
4 **APY, AGRITHERAPY, AND ADAPTIVE SPORTS,**
5 **RECREATION, AND OUTDOOR ADVENTURE.**

6 (a) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 180 days after the
7 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Vet-
8 erans Affairs shall commence the conduct of a pilot pro-
9 gram to provide complementary and integrative health
10 services described in subsection (b) to eligible veterans
11 from the Department of Veterans Affairs or through the
12 use of non-Department entities for the treatment of post-
13 traumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety, or other
14 conditions as determined by the Secretary.

15 (b) **TREATMENTS DESCRIBED.**—Complementary and
16 integrative health treatments described in this subsection
17 shall consist of the following:

- 18 (1) Equine assisted therapy.
- 19 (2) Other animal therapy.
- 20 (3) Agritherapy.
- 21 (4) Post-traumatic growth programming.
- 22 (5) Adaptive sports, recreation, and outdoor ad-
23 venture.

24 (c) **ELIGIBLE VETERANS.**—A veteran is eligible to
25 participate in the pilot program under this section if the
26 veteran—

1 (1) is enrolled in the system of patient enroll-
2 ment of the Department under section 1705(a) of
3 title 38, United States Code; and

4 (2) during the two-year period preceding the
5 initial participation of the veteran in the pilot pro-
6 gram—

7 (A) has received health care under the laws
8 administered by the Secretary; or

9 (B) has received rehabilitation and coun-
10 seling services from a Vet Center.

11 (d) DURATION.—

12 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall carry
13 out the pilot program under this section for a three-
14 year period beginning on the commencement of the
15 pilot program.

16 (2) EXTENSION.—The Secretary may extend
17 the duration of the pilot program under this section
18 if the Secretary, based on the results of the interim
19 report submitted under subsection (f)(1), determines
20 that it is appropriate to do so.

21 (e) LOCATIONS.—

22 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall select
23 not fewer than five facilities of the Department at
24 which to carry out the pilot program under this sec-
25 tion.

1 (2) SELECTION CRITERIA.—In selecting facili-
2 ties under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall ensure
3 that—

4 (A) the locations are in geographically di-
5 verse areas; and

6 (B) not fewer than three facilities serve
7 veterans in rural or highly rural areas (as de-
8 termined through the use of the Rural-Urban
9 Commuting Areas coding system of the Depart-
10 ment of Agriculture).

11 (f) RESEARCH ON EFFECTIVENESS OF TREAT-
12 MENT.—

13 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall carry
14 out the pilot program in conjunction with academic
15 researchers affiliated with the Department of Vet-
16 erans Affairs, including through agreements under
17 paragraph (2), in order for those researchers to
18 study the effectiveness of the treatments described
19 in subsection (b).

20 (2) AGREEMENTS.—Before commencing the
21 pilot program, the Secretary shall seek to enter into
22 agreements with academic researchers to ensure ro-
23 bust data collection and gathering procedures are in
24 place under the pilot program in order to produce
25 peer-reviewed journal articles.

1 (g) REPORTS.—

2 (1) INTERIM REPORT.—

3 (A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year
4 after the commencement of the pilot program
5 under this section, the Secretary shall submit to
6 the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Sen-
7 ate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of
8 the House of Representatives a report on the
9 progress of the pilot program.

10 (B) ELEMENTS.—The report required by
11 subparagraph (A) shall include the following:

12 (i) The number of participants in the
13 pilot program.

14 (ii) The type or types of therapy of-
15 fered at each facility at which the pilot
16 program is being carried out.

17 (iii) An assessment of whether partici-
18 pation by a veteran in the pilot program
19 resulted in any changes in clinically rel-
20 evant endpoints for the veteran with re-
21 spect to the conditions specified in sub-
22 section (a).

23 (iv) An assessment of effect on quality
24 of life and well-being of veterans partici-
25 pating in the pilot program, including the

1 results of a satisfaction survey of the par-
2 ticipants in the pilot program,
3 disaggregated by treatment under sub-
4 section (b).

5 (v) An assessment of whether the pilot
6 program is effective in increasing the ad-
7 herence of veterans to mental health treat-
8 ment for the conditions described in sub-
9 section (a).

10 (vi) The determination of the Sec-
11 retary with respect to extending the pilot
12 program under subsection (d)(2).

13 (vii) Any recommendations of the Sec-
14 retary with respect to expanding the pilot
15 program.

16 (2) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than 90 days
17 after the termination of the pilot program under this
18 section, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee
19 on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Com-
20 mittee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Rep-
21 resentatives a final report on the pilot program.

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