

116TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. R. 8247

AN ACT

To make certain improvements relating to the transition of individuals to services from the Department of Veterans Affairs, suicide prevention for veterans, and care and services for women veterans, 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,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

2 (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the
 3 “Veterans Comprehensive Prevention, Access to Care, and
 4 Treatment Act of 2020” or the “Veterans COMPACT Act
 5 of 2020”.

6 (b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for
 7 this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—IMPROVEMENT OF TRANSITION OF INDIVIDUALS TO
 SERVICES FROM DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Sec. 101. Pilot program on information sharing between Department of Veterans Affairs and designated relatives and friends of veterans regarding assistance and benefits available to the veterans.

Sec. 102. Annual report on Solid Start program of Department of Veterans Affairs.

TITLE II—SUICIDE PREVENTION

Sec. 201. Department of Veterans Affairs provision of emergent suicide care.

Sec. 202. Education program for family members and caregivers of veterans with mental health disorders.

Sec. 203. Interagency Task Force on Outdoor Recreation for Veterans.

Sec. 204. Contact of certain veterans to encourage receipt of comprehensive medical examinations.

Sec. 205. Police crisis intervention training of Department of Veterans Affairs.

TITLE III—IMPROVEMENT OF CARE AND SERVICES FOR WOMEN
 VETERANS

Sec. 301. Gap analysis of Department of Veterans Affairs programs that provide assistance to women veterans who are homeless.

Sec. 302. Report on locations where women veterans are using health care from Department of Veterans Affairs.

1 **TITLE I—IMPROVEMENT OF**
2 **TRANSITION OF INDIVIDUALS**
3 **TO SERVICES FROM DEPART-**
4 **MENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

5 **SEC. 101. PILOT PROGRAM ON INFORMATION SHARING BE-**
6 **TWEEN DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**
7 **AND DESIGNATED RELATIVES AND FRIENDS**
8 **OF VETERANS REGARDING ASSISTANCE AND**
9 **BENEFITS AVAILABLE TO THE VETERANS.**

10 (a) PILOT PROGRAM REQUIRED.—

11 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year
12 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-
13 retary of Veterans Affairs shall commence carrying
14 out a pilot program—

15 (A) to encourage members of the Armed
16 Forces who are transitioning from service in the
17 Armed Forces to civilian life, before separating
18 from such service, to designate up to 10 per-
19 sons to whom information regarding the assist-
20 ance and benefits available to the veterans
21 under laws administered by the Secretary shall
22 be disseminated using the contact information
23 obtained under paragraph (7); and

24 (B) provides such persons, within 30 days
25 after the date on which such persons are des-

1 ignated under subparagraph (A), the option to
2 elect to receive such information.

3 (2) DURATION.—The Secretary shall carry out
4 the pilot program during a period beginning on the
5 date of the commencement of the pilot program that
6 is not less than two years.

7 (3) DISSEMINATION.—The Secretary shall dis-
8 seminate information described in paragraph (1)(A)
9 under the pilot program no less than quarterly.

10 (4) TYPES OF INFORMATION.—The types of in-
11 formation to be disseminated under the pilot pro-
12 gram to persons who elect to receive such informa-
13 tion shall include information regarding the fol-
14 lowing:

15 (A) Services and benefits offered to vet-
16 erans and their family members by the Depart-
17 ment of Veterans Affairs.

18 (B) Challenges and stresses that might ac-
19 company transitioning from service in the
20 Armed Forces to civilian life.

21 (C) Services available to veterans and their
22 family members to cope with the experiences
23 and challenges of service in the Armed Forces
24 and transition from such service to civilian life.

1 (D) Services available through community
2 partner organizations to support veterans and
3 their family members.

4 (E) Services available through Federal,
5 State, and local government agencies to support
6 veterans and their family members.

7 (F) The environmental health registry pro-
8 gram, health and wellness programs, and re-
9 sources for preventing and managing diseases
10 and illnesses.

11 (G) A toll-free telephone number through
12 which such persons who elect to receive infor-
13 mation under the pilot program may request in-
14 formation regarding the program.

15 (H) Such other matters as the Secretary,
16 in consultation with members of the Armed
17 Forces and such persons who elect to receive in-
18 formation under the pilot program, determines
19 to be appropriate.

20 (5) PRIVACY OF INFORMATION.—In carrying
21 out the pilot program, the Secretary may not dis-
22 seminate information under paragraph (4) in viola-
23 tion of laws and regulations pertaining to the pri-
24 vacy of members of the Armed Forces, including re-
25 quirements pursuant to—

1 (A) section 552a of title 5, United States
2 Code; and

3 (B) the Health Insurance Portability and
4 Accountability Act of 1996 (Public Law 104–
5 191).

6 (6) NOTICE AND MODIFICATIONS.—In carrying
7 out the pilot program, the Secretary shall, with re-
8 spect to a veteran—

9 (A) ensure that such veteran is notified of
10 the ability to modify designations made by such
11 veteran under paragraph (1)(A); and

12 (B) upon the request of a veteran, author-
13 ize such veteran to modify such designations at
14 any time.

15 (7) CONTACT INFORMATION.—In making a des-
16 ignation under the pilot program, a veteran shall
17 provide necessary contact information, specifically
18 including an email address, to facilitate the dissemi-
19 nation of information regarding the assistance and
20 benefits available to the veteran under laws adminis-
21 tered by the Secretary.

22 (8) OPT-IN AND OPT-OUT OF PILOT PRO-
23 GRAM.—

24 (A) OPT-IN BY MEMBERS.—A veteran may
25 participate in the pilot program only if the vet-

1 eran voluntarily elects to participate in the pro-
2 gram. A veteran seeking to make such an elec-
3 tion shall make such election in a manner, and
4 by including such information, as the Secretary
5 shall specify for purposes of the pilot program.

6 (B) OPT-IN BY DESIGNATED RECIPI-
7 ENTS.—A person designated pursuant to para-
8 graph (1)(A) may receive information under the
9 pilot program only if the person makes the elec-
10 tion described in paragraph (1)(B).

11 (C) OPT-OUT.—In carrying out the pilot
12 program, the Secretary shall, with respect to a
13 person who has elected to receive information
14 under such pilot program, cease disseminating
15 such information to that person upon request of
16 such person.

17 (b) SURVEY AND REPORT ON PILOT PROGRAM.—

18 (1) SURVEY.—

19 (A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year
20 after the date of the commencement of the pilot
21 program and not less frequently than once each
22 year thereafter for the duration of the pilot pro-
23 gram, the Secretary shall administer a survey
24 to persons who ever elected to receive informa-
25 tion under the pilot program for the purpose of

1 receiving feedback regarding the quality of in-
2 formation disseminated under this section.

3 (B) ELEMENTS.—Each survey conducted
4 under subparagraph (A) shall include sollicita-
5 tion of the following:

6 (i) Feedback on the following:

7 (I) The nature of information
8 disseminated under the pilot program.

9 (II) Satisfaction with the pilot
10 program.

11 (III) The utility of the pilot pro-
12 gram.

13 (IV) Overall pilot program suc-
14 cesses and challenges.

15 (ii) Recommendations for improving
16 the pilot program.

17 (iii) Reasons for opting in or out of
18 the pilot program.

19 (iv) Such other feedback or matters as
20 the Secretary considers appropriate.

21 (2) REPORT.—

22 (A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than three
23 years after the date on which the pilot program
24 commences, the Secretary shall submit to the
25 Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House

1 of Representatives and the Senate a final report
2 on the pilot program.

3 (B) CONTENTS.—The report submitted
4 under subparagraph (A) shall include the fol-
5 lowing:

6 (i) The results of the survey adminis-
7 tered under paragraph (1).

8 (ii) The number of participants en-
9 rolled in the pilot program who are vet-
10 erans.

11 (iii) The number of persons des-
12 ignated under subsection (a)(1)(A).

13 (iv) The number of such persons who
14 opted in or out of the pilot program under
15 subsection (a)(8).

16 (v) The average period such persons
17 remained in the pilot program.

18 (vi) An assessment of the feasibility
19 and advisability of making the pilot pro-
20 gram permanent.

21 (vii) Identification of legislative or ad-
22 ministrative action that may be necessary
23 if the pilot program is made permanent.

1 (viii) A plan to expand the pilot pro-
2 gram if the pilot program is made perma-
3 nent.

4 (ix) If the Secretary finds under
5 clause (vi) that making the pilot program
6 permanent is not feasible or advisable, a
7 justification for such finding.

8 **SEC. 102. ANNUAL REPORT ON SOLID START PROGRAM OF**
9 **DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

10 (a) **REPORTS REQUIRED.**—Not later than 180 days
11 after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually
12 thereafter for a period of five years, the Secretary of Vet-
13 erans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Veterans'
14 Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a re-
15 port on the Solid Start program of the Department of Vet-
16 erans Affairs.

17 (b) **ELEMENTS.**—Each report under subsection (a)
18 shall include the following:

19 (1) With respect to each veteran called or
20 emailed under the Solid Start program:

21 (A) The Armed Force in which the veteran
22 served.

23 (B) Age.

24 (C) Gender.

1 (D) Whether the veteran responded to the
2 call or email.

3 (E) Whether the call or email resulted in
4 a call to the Veterans Crisis Line established
5 pursuant to section 1720F(h) of title 38,
6 United States Code.

7 (F) Whether the call or email resulted in
8 a referral to—

9 (i) compensation and pension deter-
10 mination;

11 (ii) enrollment in the patient enroll-
12 ment system of the Department; or

13 (iii) any other program or benefit
14 under the laws administered by the Sec-
15 retary.

16 (2) Any change to the Solid Start program im-
17 plemented by the Secretary since the date of the pre-
18 vious such report.

19 (c) PROHIBITION ON PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE IN-
20 FORMATION.—No report under subsection (a) may contain
21 any personally identifiable information regarding a vet-
22 eran.

1 **TITLE II—SUICIDE PREVENTION**

2 **SEC. 201. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PROVISION**
3 **OF EMERGENT SUICIDE CARE.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter II of chapter 17 of
5 title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the
6 end the following new section:

7 **“§ 1720J. Emergent suicide care**

8 “(a) EMERGENT SUICIDE CARE.—Pursuant to this
9 section, the Secretary shall—

10 “(1) furnish emergent suicide care to an eligible
11 individual at a medical facility of the Department;

12 “(2) pay for emergent suicide care provided to
13 an eligible individual at a non-Department facility;
14 and

15 “(3) reimburse an eligible individual for emer-
16 gent suicide care provided to the eligible individual
17 at a non-Department facility.

18 “(b) ELIGIBILITY.—An individual is eligible for emer-
19 gent suicide care under subsection (a) if the individual is
20 in an acute suicidal crisis and is either of the following:

21 “(1) A veteran (as defined in section 101).

22 “(2) An individual described in section 1720I(b)
23 of this title.

1 “(c) PERIOD OF CARE.—(1) Emergent suicide care
2 provided under subsection (a) shall be furnished to an eli-
3 gible individual—

4 “(A) through inpatient or crisis residential care,
5 for a period not to exceed 30 days; or

6 “(B) if care under subparagraph (A) is unavail-
7 able, or if such care is not clinically appropriate, as
8 outpatient care for a period not to exceed 90 days.

9 “(2) If, upon the expiration of a period under para-
10 graph (1), the Secretary determines that the eligible indi-
11 vidual remains in an acute suicidal crisis, the Secretary
12 may extend such period as the Secretary determines ap-
13 propriate.

14 “(d) NOTIFICATION.—An eligible individual who re-
15 ceives emergent suicide care under subsection (a) at a non-
16 Department facility (or a person acting on behalf of the
17 individual) shall notify the Secretary of such care within
18 seven days of admission to such facility.

19 “(e) OUTREACH.—During any period when an eligi-
20 ble individual is receiving emergent suicide care under sub-
21 section (a), the Secretary shall—

22 “(1) ensure that—

23 “(A) in the case of an eligible individual
24 whom the Veterans Crisis Line recommends to
25 seek emergent suicide care at a medical facility

1 of the Department, the Veterans Crisis Line no-
2 tifies the Suicide Prevention Coordinator of
3 such medical facility;

4 “(B) in the case of an eligible individual
5 who presents at a medical facility of the De-
6 partment in an acute suicidal crisis without a
7 recommendation by the Veterans Crisis Line,
8 the Secretary notifies the Suicide Prevention
9 Coordinator;

10 “(C) in the case of an eligible individual
11 whom the Veterans Crisis Line recommends to
12 seek treatment at a non-Department facility,
13 the Veterans Crisis Line notifies the Suicide
14 Prevention Coordinator and the Office of Com-
15 munity Care at the medical facility of the De-
16 partment located nearest to the eligible indi-
17 vidual; and

18 “(D) in the case of an eligible individual
19 who presents at a non-Department facility in an
20 acute suicidal crisis without a recommendation
21 by the Veterans Crisis Line and for whom the
22 Secretary receives a notification under sub-
23 section (d), the Secretary notifies the Suicide
24 Prevention Coordinator and the Office of Com-
25 munity Care at the medical facility of the De-

1 partment located nearest to the eligible indi-
2 vidual;

3 “(2) determine the eligibility of the eligible indi-
4 vidual for other programs and benefits under the
5 laws administered by the Secretary (or shall make
6 such determination as soon as practicable following
7 the period of such emergent suicide care); and

8 “(3) make referrals for care following the pe-
9 riod of such emergent suicide care, as the Secretary
10 determines appropriate.

11 “(f) PROHIBITION ON CHARGE.—(1) If the Secretary
12 provides emergent suicide care to an eligible individual
13 under subsection (a), the Secretary—

14 “(A) may not charge the eligible individual for
15 any cost of such emergent suicide care; and

16 “(B) shall pay for any costs of emergency
17 transportation to a facility for such emergent suicide
18 care (as such costs are determined pursuant to sec-
19 tion 1725 of this title, to the extent practicable).

20 “(2)(A) In addition to the requirements of paragraph
21 (1), if the Secretary pays for emergent suicide care pro-
22 vided under subsection (a) to an eligible individual at a
23 non-Department facility, the Secretary shall reimburse the
24 facility for the reasonable value of such emergent suicide
25 care.

1 “(B)(i) In carrying out subparagraph (A), the Sec-
2 retary may determine the amount to reimburse a non-De-
3 partment facility in a similar manner to the manner in
4 which the Secretary determines reimbursement amounts
5 for that non-Department facility for medical care and
6 services provided under another provision of this chapter.

7 “(ii) The requirements of section 1725(c)(3) of this
8 title shall apply with respect to payments made under sub-
9 paragraph (A) of this paragraph.

10 “(3) In the case of an eligible individual who receives
11 emergent suicide care under this section and who is enti-
12 tled to emergent suicide care (or payment for emergent
13 suicide care) under a health-plan contract, the Secretary
14 may recover the costs of such emergent suicide care pro-
15 vided under this section, other than for such care for a
16 service-connected disability.

17 “(4) In carrying out subsection (d), the Secretary
18 may not charge an eligible individual for any cost of emer-
19 gent suicide care provided under subsection (a) solely by
20 reason of the Secretary not having been notified of such
21 care pursuant to such subsection.

22 “(g) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not less than once each
23 year, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Vet-
24 erans’ Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representa-
25 tives a report on emergent suicide care provided under

1 subsection (a). Each such report shall include, for the year
2 covered by the report—

3 “(1) the number of eligible individuals who re-
4 ceived emergent suicide care under subsection (a);

5 “(2) demographic information regarding eligible
6 individuals described in paragraph (1);

7 “(3) the types of care furnished or paid for this
8 section; and

9 “(4) the total cost of providing care under sub-
10 section (a).

11 “(h) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

12 “(1) The term ‘acute suicidal crisis’ means that
13 an individual was determined to be at imminent risk
14 of self-harm by a trained crisis responder or health
15 care provider.

16 “(2) The term ‘crisis residential care’ means
17 crisis stabilization care provided—

18 “(A) in a residential setting; and

19 “(B) in a facility other than a hospital.

20 “(3) The term ‘crisis stabilization care’ in-
21 cludes, with respect to an individual in acute suicidal
22 crisis, care that ensures, to the extent practicable,
23 immediate safety and reduces—

24 “(A) the severity of distress;

25 “(B) the need for urgent care; or

1 “(C) the likelihood that the distress under
2 subparagraph (A) or need under subparagraph
3 (B) will increase during the transfer of that in-
4 dividual from a facility at which the individual
5 has received care for that acute suicidal crisis.

6 “(4) The term ‘emergent suicide care’ means
7 crisis stabilization care provided to an eligible indi-
8 vidual—

9 “(A) pursuant to a recommendation of the
10 eligible individual from the Veterans Crisis
11 Line; or

12 “(B) who presents at a medical facility in
13 an acute suicidal crisis.

14 “(5) The term ‘health-plan contract’ has the
15 meaning given such term in section 1725 of this
16 title.

17 “(6) The term ‘Veterans Crisis Line’ means the
18 hotline under section 1720F(h) of this title.”.

19 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections
20 at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting
21 after the item relation to section 1720I the following new
22 item:

 “1720J. Emergent suicide care.”.

23 (c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The Secretary shall furnish
24 or pay for emergent suicide care under section 1720J of
25 title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a),

1 beginning on the date that is 270 days after the date of
2 the enactment of this Act.

3 **SEC. 202. EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR FAMILY MEMBERS**
4 **AND CAREGIVERS OF VETERANS WITH MEN-**
5 **TAL HEALTH DISORDERS.**

6 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 270 days after
7 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of
8 Veterans Affairs shall establish an education program (in
9 this section referred to as the “education program”) for
10 the education and training of caregivers and family mem-
11 bers of eligible veterans with mental health disorders.

12 (b) EDUCATION PROGRAM.—

13 (1) IN GENERAL.—Under the education pro-
14 gram, the Secretary shall provide a course of edu-
15 cation to caregivers and family members of eligible
16 veterans on matters relating to coping with mental
17 health disorders in veterans.

18 (2) DURATION.—The Secretary shall carry out
19 the education program during the four-year period
20 beginning on the date of the commencement of the
21 education program.

22 (3) SCOPE.—

23 (A) CAREGIVERS.—The Secretary, with re-
24 spect to the component of the education pro-

1 gram that relates to the education and training
2 of caregivers, shall—

3 (i) include such component in the
4 training provided pursuant to the program
5 of comprehensive assistance for family
6 caregivers of the Department of Veterans
7 Affairs established under section 1720G(a)
8 of title 38, United States Code; and

9 (ii) make such component available on
10 the Internet website of the Department
11 that relates to caregiver training.

12 (B) FAMILY MEMBERS.—The Secretary
13 shall carry out the component of the education
14 program that relates to the education and
15 training of non-caregiver family members at fa-
16 cilities of the Department as follows:

17 (i) Not less than five medical centers
18 of the Department.

19 (ii) Not less than five clinics of the
20 Department.

21 (iii) Not less than five Vet Centers (as
22 defined in section 1712A(h) of title 38,
23 United States Code).

24 (C) SOLICITATION OF APPLICATIONS.—In
25 selecting locations pursuant to subparagraph

1 (B), the Secretary shall solicit applications from
2 eligible facilities of the Department that are in-
3 terested in carrying out the education program.

4 (D) CONSIDERATIONS.—In selecting loca-
5 tions pursuant to subparagraph (B), the Sec-
6 retary shall consider the feasibility and advis-
7 ability of selecting locations in the following
8 areas:

9 (i) Rural areas.

10 (ii) Areas that are not in close prox-
11 imity to an active duty installation.

12 (iii) Areas in different geographic lo-
13 cations.

14 (4) CONTRACTS.—

15 (A) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out the
16 education program, the Secretary shall enter
17 into contracts with qualified entities described
18 in subparagraph (B) to offer the course of edu-
19 cation described in paragraph (5) to family
20 members and caregivers of eligible veterans and
21 covered veterans.

22 (B) QUALIFIED ENTITY DESCRIBED.—A
23 qualified entity described in this subparagraph
24 is a non-profit entity with experience in mental

1 health education and outreach, including work
2 with children, teens, and young adults, that—

3 (i) uses high quality, relevant, and
4 age-appropriate information in educational
5 programming, materials, and coursework,
6 including such programming, materials,
7 and coursework for children, teens, and
8 young adults; and

9 (ii) works with agencies, departments,
10 nonprofit mental health organizations,
11 early childhood educators, and mental
12 health providers to develop educational
13 programming, materials, and coursework.

14 (C) PRIORITY.—In entering into contracts
15 under this paragraph, the Secretary shall give
16 priority to qualified entities that have dem-
17 onstrated cultural competence in serving mili-
18 tary and veteran populations, and, to the extent
19 practicable, use internet technology for the de-
20 livery of course content in an effort to expand
21 the availability of support services, especially in
22 rural areas.

23 (5) COURSE OF EDUCATION DESCRIBED.—The
24 course of education described in this paragraph shall
25 consist of curriculum that includes the following:

1 (A) General education on different mental
2 health disorders, including information to im-
3 prove understanding of the experiences of indi-
4 viduals suffering from such disorders.

5 (B) Techniques for handling crisis situa-
6 tions and administering mental health first aid
7 to individuals suffering from a mental health
8 disorder.

9 (C) Techniques for coping with the stress
10 of living with an individual suffering from a
11 mental health disorder.

12 (D) Information on additional services
13 available for family members and caregivers
14 through the Department or community organi-
15 zations and providers related to mental health
16 disorders.

17 (E) Such other matters as the Secretary
18 considers appropriate.

19 (c) SURVEYS.—

20 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall conduct
21 a comprehensive survey of the satisfaction of individ-
22 uals that have participated in the course of edu-
23 cation described in subsection (b)(5). Such survey
24 shall include a solicitation of feedback on the fol-
25 lowing:

1 (A) The general satisfaction of those indi-
2 viduals with the education and assistance pro-
3 vided under the education program.

4 (B) The perceived effectiveness of the edu-
5 cation program in providing education and as-
6 sistance that is useful for those individuals.

7 (C) The applicability of the education pro-
8 gram to the issues faced by those individuals.

9 (D) Such other matters as the Secretary
10 considers appropriate.

11 (2) COMPILATION OF INFORMATION.—The in-
12 formation compiled as a result of the surveys con-
13 ducted under paragraph (1) shall be—

14 (A) disaggregated by facility type at which
15 the education program was carried out; and

16 (B) included in the annual reports under
17 subsection (d)(1).

18 (d) REPORTS.—

19 (1) ANNUAL REPORTS.—

20 (A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year
21 after the date of the commencement of the edu-
22 cation program and not later than September
23 30 each year thereafter until 2024, the Sec-
24 retary shall submit to the Committee on Vet-
25 erans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee

1 on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Represent-
2 atives a report on—

3 (i) the education program; and

4 (ii) the feasibility and advisability of
5 expanding the education program to in-
6 clude the establishment of a peer support
7 program composed of individuals who com-
8 plete the education program (in this sec-
9 tion referred to as a “peer support pro-
10 gram”).

11 (B) ELEMENTS.—Each report submitted
12 under subparagraph (A) shall include the fol-
13 lowing:

14 (i) The number of individuals that
15 participated in the course of education de-
16 scribed in subsection (b)(5) during the
17 year preceding the submission of the re-
18 port.

19 (ii) A detailed analysis of the surveys
20 conducted under subsection (c) with re-
21 spect to the individuals described in clause
22 (i).

23 (iii) Any plans for expansion of the
24 education program.

1 (iv) An analysis of the feasibility and
2 advisability of establishing a peer support
3 program.

4 (v) The interim findings and conclu-
5 sions of the Secretary with respect to the
6 success of the education program and the
7 feasibility and advisability of establishing a
8 peer support program.

9 (2) FINAL REPORT.—

10 (A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year
11 after the completion of the education program,
12 the Secretary shall submit to the Committees
13 on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Represent-
14 atives and the Senate a final report on the fea-
15 sibility and advisability of continuing the edu-
16 cation program.

17 (B) ELEMENTS.—The final report under
18 subparagraph (A) shall include the following:

19 (i) A detailed analysis of the surveys
20 conducted under subsection (c).

21 (ii) An analysis of the feasibility and
22 advisability of continuing the education
23 program without entering into contracts
24 for the course of education described in
25 subsection (b)(5).

1 (iii) An analysis of the feasibility and
2 advisability of expanding the education
3 program.

4 (iv) An analysis of the feasibility and
5 advisability of establishing a peer support
6 program.

7 (e) MONITORING OF PROGRAM.—The Secretary shall
8 select mental health care providers of the Department to
9 monitor the progress of the instruction provided under the
10 education program.

11 (f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

12 (1) The term “eligible veteran” means a vet-
13 eran who is enrolled in the health care system estab-
14 lished under section 1705(a) of title 38, United
15 States Code.

16 (2) The terms “caregiver” and “family mem-
17 ber” have the meaning given those terms in section
18 1720G(d) of title 38, United States Code.

19 **SEC. 203. INTERAGENCY TASK FORCE ON OUTDOOR RECRE-**
20 **ATION FOR VETERANS.**

21 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 18 months
22 after the date on which the national emergency declared
23 by the President pursuant to the National Emergencies
24 Act (50 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.) with respect to the
25 Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID–19) expires, the Sec-

1 retary of Veterans Affairs shall establish a task force to
2 be known as the “Task Force on Outdoor Recreation for
3 Veterans” (in this section referred to as the “Task
4 Force”).

5 (b) COMPOSITION.—The Task Force shall be com-
6 posed of the following members or their designees:

7 (1) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

8 (2) The Secretary of the Interior.

9 (3) The Secretary of Health and Human Serv-
10 ices.

11 (4) The Secretary of Agriculture.

12 (5) The Secretary of Defense.

13 (6) The Secretary of Homeland Security.

14 (7) The Chief of the Army Corps of Engineers.

15 (8) At least two representatives from veterans
16 service organizations.

17 (9) Any other member that the Secretary of
18 Veterans Affairs determines to be appropriate.

19 (c) CHAIRPERSONS.—The Secretary of Veterans Af-
20 fairs and the Secretary of the Interior shall serve as co-
21 chairpersons of the Task Force (in this section referred
22 to as the “Chairpersons”).

23 (d) DUTIES.—

24 (1) TASK FORCE.—The duties of the Task
25 Force shall be—

1 (A) to identify opportunities to formalize
2 coordination between the Department of Vet-
3 erans Affairs, public land agencies, and partner
4 organizations regarding the use of public lands
5 and other outdoor spaces for facilitating health
6 and wellness for veterans;

7 (B) to identify barriers that exist to pro-
8 viding veterans with opportunities to augment
9 the delivery of services for health and wellness
10 through the use of outdoor recreation on public
11 lands and other outdoor spaces; and

12 (C) to develop recommendations to better
13 facilitate the use of public lands and other out-
14 door spaces for promoting wellness and facili-
15 tating the delivery of health care and thera-
16 peutic interventions for veterans.

17 (2) CONSULTATION.—The Task Force shall
18 carry out the duties under paragraph (1) in con-
19 sultation with appropriate veterans outdoor recre-
20 ation groups.

21 (e) REPORTS.—

22 (1) PRELIMINARY REPORT.—Not later than one
23 year after the date on which the Task Force is es-
24 tablished, the Chairpersons shall submit to Congress

1 a report on the preliminary findings of the Task
2 Force.

3 (2) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than one year
4 after the date of the submission of the preliminary
5 report under paragraph (1), the Chairpersons shall
6 submit to Congress a report on the findings of the
7 Task Force, which shall include the recommenda-
8 tions developed under subsection (d)(1)(C).

9 (f) DURATION.—The Task Force shall terminate on
10 the date that is one year after the date of the submission
11 of the final report in subsection (e)(2).

12 (g) NONAPPLICABILITY OF FEDERAL ADVISORY
13 COMMITTEE ACT.—The Federal Advisory Committee Act
14 (5 U.S.C. App.) shall not apply to the Task Force.

15 (h) PUBLIC LANDS DEFINED.—In this section, the
16 term “public lands” means any recreational lands under
17 the jurisdiction of the Federal Government or a State or
18 local government.

19 **SEC. 204. CONTACT OF CERTAIN VETERANS TO ENCOUR-**
20 **AGE RECEIPT OF COMPREHENSIVE MEDICAL**
21 **EXAMINATIONS.**

22 (a) NOTICE.—Not later than 90 days after the date
23 of the enactment of this Act, the Under Secretary of
24 Health of the Department of Veterans Affairs shall seek
25 to contact each covered veteran by mail, telephone, or

1 email to encourage each covered veteran to receive medical
2 examinations including the following:

3 (1) A comprehensive physical examination.

4 (2) A comprehensive mental health examina-
5 tion.

6 (3) A comprehensive eye examination if the cov-
7 ered veteran has not received such an examination
8 in the year immediately preceding the date of such
9 examination.

10 (4) A comprehensive audiological examination if
11 the covered veteran has not received such an exam-
12 ination in the year immediately preceding the date
13 of such examination.

14 (b) EXAMINATIONS.—

15 (1) VA HEALTH CARE FACILITIES.—If a cov-
16 ered veteran elects to receive more than one exam-
17 ination described in subsection (a) at a health care
18 facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs, the
19 Under Secretary of Health shall seek to furnish all
20 such scheduled examinations on the same day.

21 (2) COMMUNITY CARE.—Pursuant to subsection
22 (d) or (e) of section 1703 of title 38, United States
23 Code, a covered veteran may receive an examination
24 described in subsection (a) from a health care pro-
25 vider described in subsection (c) of that section.

1 (c) TRANSPORTATION.—

2 (1) BENEFICIARY TRAVEL PROGRAM.—Pursu-
3 ant to section 111 of title 38, United States Code,
4 the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may pay for a
5 rural covered veteran to travel to a health care facil-
6 ity to receive an examination described in subsection
7 (a).

8 (2) SHUTTLE SERVICE.—The Under Secretary
9 of Health shall seek to enter into agreements with
10 non-profit organizations to provide shuttle service to
11 rural covered veterans for examinations described in
12 subsection (a).

13 (d) REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than 18 months
14 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary
15 of Veterans Affairs shall submit to Congress a report re-
16 garding how many covered veterans scheduled examina-
17 tions described in subsection (a) after receiving a letter,
18 telephone call, or email under that subsection.

19 (e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

20 (1) The term “covered veteran” means a vet-
21 eran who—

22 (A) is enrolled in the patient enrollment
23 system of the Department of Veterans Affairs
24 under section 1705 of title 38, United States
25 Code; and

1 (B) has not received health care furnished
2 or paid for by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs
3 during the two years immediately preceding the
4 date in subsection (a)(1).

5 (2) The term “rural covered veteran” means a
6 covered veteran—

7 (A) who lives in an area served by the Of-
8 fice of Rural Health of the Department of Vet-
9 erans Affairs; and

10 (B) whom the Under Secretary of Health
11 determines requires assistance to travel to a
12 health care facility to receive an examination
13 described in subsection (a).

14 (3) The term “veteran” has the meaning given
15 that term in section 101 of title 38, United States
16 Code.

17 **SEC. 205. POLICE CRISIS INTERVENTION TRAINING OF DE-**
18 **PARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

19 (a) TRAINING.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs
20 shall provide to Department police officers an annual
21 training on the prevention of suicide among the population
22 served by the Department police officers.

23 (b) CURRICULUM.—In carrying out subsection (a),
24 the Secretary shall update any similar training provided
25 before the date of the enactment of this Act to ensure that

1 the curriculum for the training addresses, at a minimum,
2 the following:

3 (1) Effective behavioral science procedures for
4 suicide prevention and risk mitigation.

5 (2) Crisis intervention and de-escalation skills,
6 including through the use of interactive training.

7 (3) Information about mental health and sub-
8 stance abuse disorders.

9 (4) Information about local law enforcement
10 crisis intervention teams and other resources for vet-
11 erans experiencing mental health crises available by
12 the Department of Veterans Affairs, other elements
13 of the Federal Government, and the community in
14 which the police officers serve.

15 (c) CONSULTATION.—The Secretary shall ensure that
16 the annual training provided to Department police officers
17 at a medical facility of the Department under subsection
18 (a) is provided in consultation with law enforcement train-
19 ing accreditation organizations and the mental health ex-
20 perts at such facility.

21 (d) PLAN ON COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS.—The
22 Secretary shall ensure that each police force of a facility
23 of the Department develops a plan to enter into partner-
24 ships with—

1 (1) local community mental health organiza-
2 tions and experts, local community veterans organi-
3 zations, and local community criminal justice organi-
4 zations and experts; and

5 (2) local police departments, including by facili-
6 tating the sharing of training resources with crisis
7 intervention teams of the local police departments.

8 (e) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date
9 of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit
10 to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of
11 Representatives and the Senate a report on the annual
12 training under subsection (a), including—

13 (1) a description of the curriculum of such
14 training;

15 (2) with respect to the year preceding the date
16 of the report—

17 (A) the number of facilities of the Depart-
18 ment that conducted such training;

19 (B) the number of Department police offi-
20 cers who received such training; and

21 (C) any barriers to ensuring that each De-
22 partment police officer receives such training;

23 (3) any recommendations to address the bar-
24 riers identified under paragraph (2)(C); and

1 (4) the number of facilities of the Department
2 that have entered into partnerships pursuant to sub-
3 section (d).

4 (f) DEPARTMENT POLICE OFFICER DEFINED.—In
5 this section, the term “Department police officer” means
6 an employee of the Department of Veterans Affairs speci-
7 fied in section 902(a) of title 38, United States Code.

8 **TITLE III—IMPROVEMENT OF**
9 **CARE AND SERVICES FOR**
10 **WOMEN VETERANS**

11 **SEC. 301. GAP ANALYSIS OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS**
12 **AFFAIRS PROGRAMS THAT PROVIDE ASSIST-**
13 **ANCE TO WOMEN VETERANS WHO ARE HOME-**
14 **LESS.**

15 (a) ANALYSIS.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs
16 shall complete an analysis of programs of the Department
17 of Veterans Affairs that provide assistance to women vet-
18 erans who are homeless or precariously housed to identify
19 the areas in which such programs are failing to meet the
20 needs of such women.

21 (b) REPORT.—Not later than 270 days after the date
22 of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit
23 to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of
24 Representatives and the Senate a report on the analysis
25 completed under subsection (a).

1 **SEC. 302. REPORT ON LOCATIONS WHERE WOMEN VET-**
2 **ERANS ARE USING HEALTH CARE FROM DE-**
3 **PARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

4 (a) REPORT.—Not later than 90 days after the date
5 of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the
6 Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Commit-
7 tees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives
8 and the Senate a report on the use by women veterans
9 of health care from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

10 (b) ELEMENTS.—Each report required by subsection
11 (a) shall include the following information:

12 (1) The number of women veterans who reside
13 in each State.

14 (2) The number of women veterans in each
15 State who are enrolled in the patient enrollment sys-
16 tem of the Department under section 1705(a) of
17 title 38, United States Code.

18 (3) Of the women veterans who are so enrolled,
19 the number who have received health care under the
20 laws administered by the Secretary at least one time
21 during the one-year period preceding the submission
22 of the report.

23 (4) The number of women veterans who have
24 been seen at each medical facility of the Department
25 during such year, disaggregated by facility.

1 (5) The number of appointments that women
2 veterans have had at a medical facility of the De-
3 partment during such year, disaggregated by—

4 (A) facility; and

5 (B) appointments for—

6 (i) primary care;

7 (ii) specialty care; and

8 (iii) mental health care.

9 (6) For each appointment type specified in
10 paragraph (5)(B), the number of appointments com-
11 pleted in-person and the number of appointments
12 completed through the use of telehealth.

13 (7) If known, an identification of the medical
14 facility of the Department in each Veterans Inte-
15 grated Service Network with the largest rate of in-
16 crease in patient population of women veterans as
17 measured by the increase in unique women veteran
18 patient use.

19 (8) If known, an identification of the medical
20 facility of the Department in each Veterans Inte-
21 grated Service Network with the largest rate of de-
22 crease in patient population of women veterans as

1 measured by the decrease in unique women veterans
2 patient use.

Passed the House of Representatives September 23,
2020.

Attest:

Clerk.

116TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. R. 8247

AN ACT

To make certain improvements relating to the transition of individuals to services from the Department of Veterans Affairs, suicide prevention for veterans, and care and services for women veterans, and for other purposes.