H. R. 9109

To amend the Public Health Service Act to provide support for bereavement services, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 30, 2022

Mr. MORELLE introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

A BILL

To amend the Public Health Service Act to provide support for bereavement services, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Grief Resilience Investment and Education Fund Act” or the “GRIEF Act”.

SEC. 2. BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT AND RESEARCH.

Title V of the Public Health Service Act is amended by adding at the end the following new part:
“PART L—BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT AND RESEARCH

“SEC. 598. NATIONAL PUBLIC INFORMATION CAMPAIGN ON GRIEF LITERACY AND THE IMPORTANCE AND AVAILABILITY OF BEREAVEMENT CARE.

“(a) In General.—The Secretary shall establish, and begin coordinating and evaluating, a targeted public education campaign that is designed to focus on the individual and community-wide consequences of loss when grief is unacknowledged and unsupported. Such campaign shall be designed to—

“(1) improve the general understanding of grief and loss, including with respect to individuals grieving the loss of a family member or loved one to COVID–19; and

“(2) encourage help-seeking behaviors relating to grief and loss, including the availability of resources in communities throughout the United States.

“(b) Authorization of Appropriations.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section $50,000,000 for the period of fiscal years 2022 through 2023.
“SEC. 598A. EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR BEREAVEMENT CARE PROVIDERS AND PEER SUPPORT.

“(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish a grant program under which the Secretary will award grants to eligible entities to provide grief and bereavement services and expand access to such services.

“(b) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—An entity is eligible to receive a grant under this section if such entity is, or contracts with another entity that is, a nonprofit or for-profit organization that has experience administering bereavement care programs or training health care providers, such as a hospice, hospital, palliative care provider, or other organization, as determined by the Secretary.

“(c) USE OF FUNDS.—An eligible entity may use funds received through a grant awarded under this section—

“(1) to develop and disseminate resources designed to help social workers, grief counselors, chaplains, and other bereavement care providers train others in understanding the basics of grief, evidence-based interventions, culturally appropriate care, and where to locate community grief resources in response to the COVID–19 pandemic;

“(2) to provide training for professionals referred to in paragraph (1) to expand the care such
providers furnish during public health emergencies, such as the COVID–19 pandemic; and

“(3) provide for training for peer-to-peer bereavement support.

“(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section $40,000,000 for the period of fiscal years 2023 through 2027.

“SEC. 598B. GRIEF AND BEREAVEMENT CARE FOR INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES.

“(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish a grant program under which the Secretary will award grants to eligible entities to provide grief and bereavement care to individuals (including individuals who have not yet attained the age of 18) affected by COVID–19 and related deaths.

“(b) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—An entity is eligible to receive a grant under this section if such entity is a non-profit or for-profit organization that has experience administering bereavement care programs or training health care providers with respect to grief, such as a hospice, hospital, palliative care provider, youth-focused nonprofit organization, a school, or other organization, as determined by the Secretary.
“(c) SELECTION.—In selecting recipients of grants under this section, the Secretary shall consider, with respect to the eligible entity submitting the application for such a grant—

“(1) whether the entity has provided letters of support from other community organizations;

“(2) the length of service of the entity in providing evidence-based bereavement care in the community and number of patients served;

“(3) the existing structure of the entity for providing care in the community; and

“(4) the qualifications of the entity’s providers working in the community.

“(d) USE OF FUNDS.—An eligible entity may use funds received through a grant awarded under this section to—

“(1) operate grief support groups;

“(2) provide psychotherapy, health behavior assessment and intervention services, psychological testing or diagnostic examination services, and care coordination and referral services;

“(3) purchase, maintain, and operate software and hardware needed for operating remote and virtual counseling; and
“(4) develop and provide community-based bereavement and grief services, including individual counseling.

“(e) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—The Secretary shall, not later than 5 years after the date of the enactment of this section, submit to Congress a report on the grant program under this section. Such report shall include—

“(1) the number of patients served by the program;

“(2) the geographic distribution of recipients of such grant and the provision of bereavement care in underserved areas; and

“(3) partnerships between such recipients and other community organizations.

“(f) FUNDING.—

“(1) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section $150,000,000 for the period of fiscal years 2023 through 2027.

“(2) ALLOCATION.—Of the funds made available to carry out this section for a fiscal year—

“(A) 33 percent shall be used for grants to provide grief and bereavement care to individuals who have not yet attained the age of 18; and
“(B) the remainder shall be used for grants to provide grief and bereavement care to other individuals.

“SEC. 598C. RESEARCH ON COVID–19 AND COMPLICATED GRIEF.

“(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, acting through the Director of the National Institutes of Health, shall conduct and support research examining the experience of complicated and prolonged grief, and the efficacy of interventions for prevention and treatment, including the unique circumstances of complicated and prolonged grief related to the COVID–19 pandemic and other national emergencies, with the goal of identifying unique needs of individuals seeking help for grief stemming from such emergencies.

“(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section $10,000,000 for the period of fiscal years 2023 through 2027.”.