

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 4677

To increase language access to mental health services at certain health centers, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 28, 2022

Mr. HEINRICH (for himself, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. BOOKER, and Ms. WARREN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To increase language access to mental health services at certain health centers, 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 “Mental Health Work-
5 force and Language Access Act of 2022”.

1 **SEC. 2. PILOT PROGRAM TO INCREASE LANGUAGE ACCESS**
2 **AT FEDERALLY QUALIFIED HEALTH CEN-**
3 **TERS.**

4 (a) LOAN REPAYMENTS TO QUALIFIED MENTAL
5 HEALTH PROFESSIONALS.—

6 (1) IN GENERAL.—For the purpose of increas-
7 ing language access to mental health services, the
8 Secretary shall carry out a demonstration project
9 under which—

10 (A) the Secretary matches qualified mental
11 health professionals with Federally qualified
12 health centers;

13 (B) the qualified mental health profes-
14 sionals each agree to a period of obligated serv-
15 ice at a Federally qualified health center with
16 which they are so matched; and

17 (C) the Secretary agrees to make loan re-
18 payments under section 338B of the Public
19 Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 254l–1) on be-
20 half of such qualified mental health profes-
21 sionals.

22 (2) PREFERENCE.—In matching qualified men-
23 tal health professionals with Federally qualified
24 health centers under paragraph (1), the Secretary
25 shall give preference to placement at Federally quali-
26 fied health centers at which at least 20 percent of

1 the patients are best served in a language other than
2 English, as indicated by data in the Uniform Data
3 System (or any successor database) or as otherwise
4 determined by the Secretary.

5 (3) ENHANCED COMPENSATION.—For each
6 year of obligated service that a qualified mental
7 health professional contracts to serve under para-
8 graph (1) at a Federally qualified health center at
9 which at least 20 percent of the patients are best
10 served in a language other than English, as indi-
11 cated by data in the Uniform Data System (or any
12 successor database) or as otherwise determined by
13 the Secretary, the Secretary shall pay the qualified
14 mental health professional—

15 (A) except as provided in subparagraph
16 (B), \$10,000 above the maximum amount oth-
17 erwise applicable under section 338B(g)(2)(A)
18 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C.
19 254l–1(g)(2)(A)); or

20 (B) if the qualified mental health profes-
21 sional is fluent in a language other than
22 English that is needed by such Federally quali-
23 fied health center, \$15,000 above such max-
24 imum amount.

1 (4) ACHIEVING FLUENCY.—A qualified mental
2 health professional subject to the pay amount speci-
3 fied in paragraph (3)(A) at the beginning of the pro-
4 fessional's period of obligated service may transition
5 to being subject to the higher pay amount specified
6 in paragraph (3)(B) if the professional is determined
7 by the Federally qualified health center at which the
8 professional serves to have achieved fluency in a lan-
9 guage other than English needed by that health cen-
10 ter.

11 (b) GRANTS TO HEALTH CENTERS.—

12 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall carry
13 out a demonstration program consisting of awarding
14 grants under section 330 of the Public Health Serv-
15 ice Act (42 U.S.C. 254b) to Federally qualified
16 health centers to recruit, hire, employ, and supervise
17 qualified mental health professionals who are fluent
18 in a language other than English to provide mental
19 health services in such other language.

20 (2) PREFERENCE.—In selecting grant recipi-
21 ents under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall give
22 preference to Federally qualified health centers at
23 which at least 20 percent of the patients are best
24 served in a language other than English, as indi-
25 cated by data in the Uniform Data System (or any

1 successor database) or as otherwise determined by
2 the Secretary.

3 (3) MARKETING.—A Federally qualified health
4 center receiving a grant under this subsection shall
5 use a portion of the grant funds to disseminate in-
6 formation about, and otherwise market, the mental
7 health services supported through the grant.

8 (c) REPORTS.—

9 (1) INITIAL REPORT.—Not later than 6 months
10 after the first loan repayment awards have been
11 made under subsection (a) and the first grants have
12 been awarded under subsection (b), the Secretary
13 shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of
14 the House of Representatives and the Senate, and to
15 other appropriate congressional committees, a report
16 on the implementation of the programs under this
17 section. Such report shall include—

18 (A) the languages spoken by the qualified
19 mental health professionals receiving loan re-
20 payments pursuant to subsection (a) or re-
21 cruited pursuant to a grant under subsection
22 (b);

23 (B) the Federally qualified health centers
24 at which such professionals were placed;

1 (C) how many Federally qualified health
 2 centers received funding through the grant pro-
 3 gram under subsection (b);

4 (D) an analysis, conducted in consultation
 5 with the Federally qualified health centers re-
 6 ceiving grants under section (b), of the effec-
 7 tiveness of such grants at increasing language
 8 access to mental health services; and

9 (E) best practices, developed in consulta-
 10 tion with Federally qualified health centers re-
 11 ceiving grants under section (b), for the recruit-
 12 ment and retention of mental health profes-
 13 sionals at Federally qualified health centers.

14 (2) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than September
 15 30, 2026, the Secretary shall submit to the Commit-
 16 tees on Appropriations of the House of Representa-
 17 tives and the Senate, and to other appropriate con-
 18 gressional committees, a final report on the imple-
 19 mentation of the programs under this section, in-
 20 cluding the information, analysis, and best practices
 21 listed in subparagraphs (A) through (E) of para-
 22 graph (1).

23 (d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

24 (1) FEDERALLY QUALIFIED HEALTH CEN-
 25 TER.—The term “Federally qualified health center”

has the meaning given the term in section 1861(aa) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395x(aa)).

(2) QUALIFIED MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL.—The term “qualified mental health professional” means—

(A) a physician, allopathic physician, osteopathic physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant with a specialty in mental health and psychiatry;

(B) a health service psychologist;

(C) a licensed clinical social worker;

(D) a psychiatric nurse specialist;

(E) a marriage and family therapist;

(F) a licensed professional counselor;

(G) a substance use disorder counselor;

(H) an occupational therapist; or

(I) any other individual who—

(i) has not yet been licensed or certified to serve as a professional listed in any of subparagraphs (A) through (H); and

(ii) will serve at the Federally qualified health center under the supervision of a licensed individual or certified professional so listed.

1 (3) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
2 the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

3 (e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

4 (1) IN GENERAL.—To carry out this section,
5 there is authorized to be appropriated \$75,000,000
6 for each of fiscal years 2023 through 2027.

7 (2) SUPPLEMENT NOT SUPPLANT.—Amounts
8 made available to carry out this section shall be in
9 addition to amounts otherwise available to provide
10 mental health services at Federally qualified health
11 centers pursuant to sections 338B and 330 of the
12 Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 254l–1, 254b).

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