

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 9426

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program under which the Secretary may fill vacant shifts at medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs with non-Department health care providers.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

AUGUST 30, 2024

Mr. BOST introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program under which the Secretary may fill vacant shifts at medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs with non-Department health care providers.

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 “Safeguarding VA’s
5 Healthcare Workforce Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. PILOT PROGRAM TO FILL VACANT SHIFTS AT MED-**
2 **ICAL FACILITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF**
3 **VETERANS AFFAIRS WITH NON-DEPARTMENT**
4 **HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS.**

5 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than one year after
6 the date of the enactment of this Act, Secretary of Vet-
7 erans Affairs shall carry out a pilot program under which
8 the Secretary may fill a vacant shift at a medical facility
9 of the Department of Veterans Affairs with a non-Depart-
10 ment health care provider.

11 (b) AGREEMENTS; PAYMENTS.—To carry out the
12 pilot program, the Secretary shall seek to enter into at
13 least one agreement with an entity that employs or con-
14 tracts with health care providers. Pursuant to such an
15 agreement, the Secretary shall pay the entity a fixed rate
16 for each shift filled by such entity under the pilot program.

17 (c) LIMITATION.—The Secretary may not, under the
18 pilot program, fill a vacant shift at a medical facility of
19 the Department with a non-Department health care pro-
20 vider unless the number of vacant shifts at such facility
21 reaches a minimum number or percentage prescribed by
22 the Secretary.

23 (d) LOCATIONS.—The Secretary shall carry out the
24 pilot program in medical facilities of not more than two
25 Veterans Integrated Services Networks. In selecting a fa-

1 cility for the pilot program, the Secretary shall give pref-
2 erence to a facility—

3 (1) located in a rural area; or

4 (2) that historically has a high rate of vacant
5 shifts.

6 (e) PRIVACY.—To protect the privacy of a veteran
7 who receives hospital care or medical services under the
8 pilot program, the Secretary shall restrict the access, to
9 medical records of the Department, of a provider who fills
10 a vacant shift under the pilot program, to only such
11 records of a veteran to whom such provider provides hos-
12 pital care or medical services.

13 (f) REPORTS.—

14 (1) REQUIREMENT.—The Secretary shall sub-
15 mit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the
16 Senate and House of Representatives a report on the
17 pilot program not later than—

18 (A) 21 months after the date on which the
19 Secretary begins to carry out the pilot program;
20 and

21 (B) 90 days after the date on which the
22 pilot program terminates.

23 (2) ELEMENTS.—Each such report shall include
24 the following elements:

1 (A) How frequently the Secretary filled a
2 vacant shift under the pilot program.

3 (B) The medical specialties relating to va-
4 cant shifts that were most frequently filled
5 under the pilot program.

6 (C) The number of veterans who received
7 hospital care or medical services under the pilot
8 program.

9 (g) TERMINATION.—The pilot program shall termi-
10 nate three years after the date on which the Secretary be-
11 gins to carry out the pilot program.

○