

1 (2) MEDICAL CENTERS.—The Secretary shall
2 ensure that such pilot program is carried out by not
3 fewer than five medical centers of the Department of
4 Veterans Affairs located in geographically diverse
5 areas.

6 (c) AGREEMENTS WITH ENTITIES.—In carrying out
7 the pilot program under subsection (a), the Secretary shall
8 seek to enter into agreements with nongovernmental enti-
9 ties that the Secretary determines have the demonstrated
10 ability to provide the canine training specified in sub-
11 section (a).

12 (d) REQUIRED CONDITIONS.—The Secretary shall in-
13 clude in any agreement under subsection (c) conditions re-
14 quiring that the nongovernmental entity seeking to enter
15 into the agreement—

16 (1) submits to the Secretary certification that
17 the entity is an accredited service dog training orga-
18 nization;

19 (2) agrees to ensure that veterans participating
20 in the pilot program under subsection (a) receive
21 training from certified service dog training instruc-
22 tors for a period of time determined appropriate by
23 the entity;

24 (3) agrees to ensure that veterans participating
25 in such pilot program are prohibited from having ac-

1 cess to a dog under such pilot program at any time
2 during such participation without the supervision of
3 a certified service dog training instructor;

4 (4) agrees to ensure that veterans participating
5 in such pilot program receive training in skills
6 unique to the needs of the veteran to address or al-
7 leviate PTSD symptoms of the veteran;

8 (5) agrees not to use shock collars or prong col-
9 lars as training tools and to use positive reinforce-
10 ment training; and

11 (6) agrees to provide any follow-up training
12 support specified in subsection (e)(2), as applicable.

13 (e) ADOPTION OF DOG.—

14 (1) IN GENERAL.—A veteran who has partici-
15 pated in the pilot program under subsection (a) may
16 adopt a dog that the veteran assisted in training
17 during such pilot program if the veteran and the vet-
18 eran's health provider (in consultation with the enti-
19 ty that provided the canine training with respect to
20 the dog under such pilot program) determine that it
21 is in the best interest of the veteran.

22 (2) FOLLOW-UP TRAINING SUPPORT.—If a vet-
23 eran adopts a dog under paragraph (1), the entity
24 that provided the canine training with respect to the
25 dog under the pilot program shall provide follow-up

1 training support for the life of the dog. Such sup-
2 port shall include the provision of a contact plan be-
3 tween the veteran and the entity that enables the
4 veteran to seek and receive assistance from the enti-
5 ty to ensure the dog is being properly cared for.

6 (f) ELIGIBILITY FOR OTHER CARE AND TREAT-
7 MENT.—Participation in the pilot program under sub-
8 section (a) may not preclude a veteran from receiving any
9 other medical care or treatment for PTSD furnished by
10 the Department, including therapy, for which the veteran
11 is otherwise eligible.

12 (g) COLLECTION OF DATA.—In carrying out this sec-
13 tion, the Secretary shall—

14 (1) develop metrics and other appropriate
15 means to measure, with respect to veterans partici-
16 pating in the pilot program under subsection (a)—

17 (A) the number of such veterans partici-
18 pating;

19 (B) the satisfaction of such veterans with
20 the pilot program;

21 (C) whether participation in the pilot pro-
22 gram resulted in any clinically relevant improve-
23 ments for such veterans, as determined by the
24 health care provider or clinical team that re-

1 ferred the veteran to participate in the pilot
2 program; and

3 (D) such other factors as the Secretary
4 may determine appropriate; and

5 (2) establish processes to document and track
6 the progress of such veterans under the pilot pro-
7 gram with respect to health benefits and improve-
8 ments.

9 (h) REPORT BY SECRETARY.—Not later than one
10 year before the date on which the pilot program under
11 subsection (a) terminates, the Secretary shall submit to
12 the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Rep-
13 resentatives and the Senate a report containing the rec-
14 ommendations of the Secretary regarding—

15 (1) whether to extend or make permanent the
16 pilot program; and

17 (2) the feasibility and advisability of expanding
18 the pilot program to address mental health condi-
19 tions other than PTSD.

20 (i) GAO BRIEFING AND STUDY.—

21 (1) BRIEFING.—Not later than one year after
22 the date of the commencement of the pilot program
23 under subsection (a), the Comptroller General of the
24 United States shall provide to the Committees on
25 Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives

1 and the Senate a briefing on the methodology estab-
2 lished for the pilot program.

3 (2) REPORT.—Not later than 270 days after
4 the date on which the pilot program terminates, the
5 Comptroller General shall submit to the committees
6 specified in paragraph (1) a report on the pilot pro-
7 gram. Such report shall include an evaluation of the
8 approach and methodology used for the pilot pro-
9 gram with respect to—

10 (A) assisting veterans with PTSD; and

11 (B) measuring relevant metrics, such as
12 reduction in scores under the Clinician Admin-
13 istered PTSD Scale (CAPS), improvement in
14 psychosocial function, and therapeutic compli-
15 ance.

16 (j) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

17 (1) The term “accredited service dog training
18 organization” means an organization described in
19 section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of
20 1986 that—

21 (A) provides service dogs to veterans with
22 PTSD; and

23 (B) is accredited by an accrediting organi-
24 zation with demonstrated experience, national
25 scope, and recognized leadership and expertise

1 in the training of service dogs and education in
2 the use of service dogs (as determined by the
3 Secretary).

4 (2) The term “eligible veteran” means a vet-
5 eran who—

6 (A) is enrolled in the patient enrollment
7 system in the Department of Veterans Affairs
8 under section 1705 of title 38, United States
9 Code; and

10 (B) has been recommended for participa-
11 tion in the pilot program under subsection (a)
12 by a qualified mental health care provider or
13 clinical team based on medical judgment that
14 the veteran may benefit from such participation
15 with respect to the diagnosed PTSD of the vet-
16 eran.

17 (3) The term “service dog training instructor”
18 means an instructor who provides the direct training
19 of veterans with PTSD in the art and science of
20 service dog training and handling.

1 **SEC. 3. PROVISION OF SERVICE DOGS AND VETERINARY IN-**
2 **SURANCE BENEFITS TO VETERANS WITH**
3 **POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER WHO**
4 **DO NOT HAVE CERTAIN IMPAIRMENTS.**

5 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1714 of title 38, United
6 States Code, is amended by adding at the end the fol-
7 lowing new subsections:

8 “(e) The Secretary may provide a service dog to a
9 veteran under subsection (c)(3) regardless of whether the
10 veteran has a mobility impairment.

11 “(f)(1) The Secretary shall provide to any veteran de-
12 scribed in paragraph (2) a commercially available veteri-
13 nary insurance policy for each dog provided to such vet-
14 eran under subsection (b) or (c).

15 “(2) A veteran described in this paragraph is a vet-
16 eran who—

17 “(A) is diagnosed with post-traumatic stress
18 disorder or a visual, hearing, or substantial mobility
19 impairment;

20 “(B) has received a dog under subsection (b) or
21 (c) in connection with such disorder or impairment;
22 and

23 “(C) meets such other requirements as the Sec-
24 retary may prescribe.”.

25 (b) APPLICABILITY.—Section 1714(f) of title 38,
26 United States Code, as added by subsection (a), shall

1 apply with respect to a veteran provided a dog by the Sec-
2 retary of Veterans Affairs regardless of whether the provi-
3 sion occurs before, on, or after the date of the enactment
4 of this Act.

