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(Original Signature of Member)

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R.

To amend the VA MISSION Act of 2018 to expand reporting on hiring in the Veterans Health Administration, and to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program to expedite the onboarding process for new medical providers of the Veterans Health Administration, to reduce the duration of the hiring process for such medical providers, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. CROW introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To amend the VA MISSION Act of 2018 to expand reporting on hiring in the Veterans Health Administration, and to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program to expedite the onboarding process for new medical providers of the Veterans Health Administration, to reduce the duration of the hiring process for such medical providers, 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.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Veterans Improved Ac-
3 cess to Care Act of 2021”.

4 **SEC. 2. EXPANSION OF QUARTERLY UPDATE OF INFORMA-**
5 **TION ON STAFFING AND VACANCIES AT FA-**
6 **CILITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VET-**
7 **ERANS AFFAIRS TO INCLUDE INFORMATION**
8 **ON DURATION OF HIRING PROCESS.**

9 (a) QUARTERLY UPDATE.—Subsection (a)(1) of sec-
10 tion 505 of the VA MISSION Act of 2018 (Public Law
11 115–182; 38 U.S.C. 301 note) is amended by adding at
12 the end the following new subparagraph:

13 “(E) Beginning with any update under
14 paragraph (3) on or after the date of the enact-
15 ment of the Veterans Improved Access and
16 Care Act of 2020, the following:

17 “(i) For employees appointed under
18 paragraphs (1) and (3) of section 7401 of
19 title 38, United States Code, the number
20 of employees for which the duration of the
21 process from validation of vacancy to re-
22 ceipt of official offer and notification of ac-
23 tual start date exceeds the metrics laid out
24 in the Time to Hire Model of the Veterans
25 Health Administration, or successor model.

1 “(ii) The percentage of employees who
2 are described in clause (i) compared to all
3 employees appointed under paragraphs (1)
4 and (3) of section 7401 of such title dur-
5 ing the same period.

6 “(iii) The average number of days po-
7 tential hires or new hires appointed under
8 paragraphs (1) and (3) of section 7401 of
9 such title spent in each phase of the Time
10 to Hire Model, or successor model.”.

11 (b) REDUCTION IN FREQUENCY OF INSPECTOR GEN-
12 ERAL REVIEWS.—Subsection (a)(5) of such section is
13 amended by striking “a semi-annual basis” and inserting
14 “an annual basis”.

15 (c) ANNUAL REPORT.—Subsection (b) of such section
16 is amended, in the first sentence, by adding before the
17 period at the end the following: “and to improve the on-
18 board timeline for facilities for which the duration of the
19 onboarding process exceeds the metrics laid out in the
20 Time to Hire Model of the Veterans Health Administra-
21 tion, or successor model”.

22 **SEC. 3. PILOT PROGRAM ON EXPEDITING THE DEPART-**
23 **MENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PROCESS FOR**
24 **ONBOARDING NEW MEDICAL PROVIDERS.**

25 (a) PILOT PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than [____],
2 the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall implement a
3 pilot program to assess the feasibility and advis-
4 ability of expediting the process of the Veterans
5 Health Administration for onboarding new medical
6 providers.

7 (2) GOAL FOR PROGRAM.—Under the pilot pro-
8 gram, the Secretary shall seek to reduce the length
9 of time it takes to onboard medical providers to no
10 more than 60 days.

11 (3) TERMINATION.—The pilot program shall
12 terminate two years after implementation. The Sec-
13 retary may extend the pilot program for two addi-
14 tional years if the Secretary submits to Congress
15 written notification not later than [____] before
16 the beginning of such extension.

17 (b) LOCATIONS.—

18 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall select
19 not fewer than ten medical facilities of the Depart-
20 ment of Veterans Affairs at which to carry out the
21 pilot program.

22 (2) REGIONAL DIVERSITY.—The medical facili-
23 ties selected under paragraph (1) shall be located in
24 regionally diverse areas, as determined by the Sec-
25 retary.

1 (3) POPULATION DENSITY.—Of the medical fa-
2 cilities selected under paragraph (1), at least three
3 facilities shall be selected in areas with fewer than
4 100,000 people.

5 (4) PRIORITY.—In selecting medical facilities
6 under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall give pri-
7 ority to medical facilities facing hiring shortages of
8 licensed independent medical providers.

9 (c) INTERIM BRIEFINGS; FINAL REPORT.—The Sec-
10 retary shall submit to Congress—

11 (1) a briefing at the end of each year of the
12 pilot program; and

13 (2) a report at the termination of the pilot pro-
14 gram.

15 (d) ONBOARDING PROCESS DEFINED.—In this sec-
16 tion, the term “onboarding process” means the process of
17 bringing on a medical provider applicant after the medical
18 provider is offered a tentative position, including—

19 (1) certification of credentials;

20 (2) background investigation;

21 (3) assessment of health status; and

22 (4) other actions the Secretary determines are
23 necessary for starting employment.

1 **SEC. 4. STRATEGY TO REDUCE DURATION OF HIRING**
2 **PROCESS OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AF-**
3 **FAIRS FOR LICENSED PROFESSIONAL MED-**
4 **ICAL PROVIDERS.**

5 (a) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 180 days after the
6 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Vet-
7 erans Affairs shall submit to Congress a strategy to reduce
8 the duration of the hiring process of the Department of
9 Veterans Affairs for licensed professional medical pro-
10 viders by half.

11 (b) **EXPEDITED CERTIFICATION.**—The strategy sub-
12 mitted under subsection (a) shall describe how the process
13 of the Department to certify the credentials of licensed
14 professional medical providers may be expedited.