

114TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1604

To amend the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 to expand the eligibility of veterans to receive mental health care at non-Department of Veterans Affairs facilities.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 25, 2015

Mr. MACARTHUR (for himself and Mr. O’ROURKE) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs

A BILL

To amend the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 to expand the eligibility of veterans to receive mental health care at non-Department of Veterans Affairs facilities.

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 “Veterans’ Mental
5 Health Care Access Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) There is a widely recognized crisis of post-
2 traumatic stress disorder and other service-related
3 mental health disorders among veterans.

4 (2) Every day on average in the United States,
5 22 veterans commit suicide.

6 (3) Of those 22 veterans, 17 never pursued
7 mental health care from a facility of the Department
8 of Veterans Affairs.

9 (4) Veterans need to be able to immediately ac-
10 cess mental health care from any provider within or
11 outside of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

12 **SEC. 3. PROVISION OF MENTAL HEALTH CARE UNDER VET-**
13 **ERANS CHOICE PROGRAM.**

14 Section 101(b)(2) of the Veterans Access, Choice,
15 and Accountability Act of 2014 (38 U.S.C. 1701 note) is
16 amended—

17 (1) in subparagraph (C)(ii), by striking “or”;

18 (2) in subparagraph (D), by striking the period
19 at the end and inserting “; or”; and

20 (3) by adding at the end the following new sub-
21 paragraph:

22 “(E) notwithstanding paragraph (1)(A),
23 seeks mental health care at an entity described
24 in clause (i) or (ii) of subsection (a)(1)(B), re-
25 gardless of—

1 “(i) the date on which the veteran en-
2 rolled in the patient enrollment system of
3 the Department under section 1705 of title
4 38, United States Code;

5 “(ii) whether the veteran has at-
6 tempted to schedule an appointment for
7 the receipt of such care at a facility of the
8 Department; or

9 “(iii) the location of the residence of
10 the veteran.”.

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