

114TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1843

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a pilot program to improve access to supportive services and community coordination for families of disabled veterans.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 16, 2015

Mrs. LAWRENCE (for herself and Ms. JACKSON LEE) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a pilot program to improve access to supportive services and community coordination for families of disabled veterans.

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. PILOT PROGRAM FOR GREATER DIRECT AC-**
4 **CESS TO SUPPORTIVE SERVICES AND COM-**
5 **MUNITY COORDINATION FOR DISABLED VET-**
6 **ERANS FAMILIES.**

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—Commencing not later than 180
8 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-

1 retary of Veterans Affairs (VA) shall carry out a three
2 year pilot program with community partners to provide
3 intensive community care coordination and supportive
4 services to disabled veteran families who lack access to VA
5 or other direct wellness services.

6 (b) AGREEMENTS WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERS.—

7 In carrying out the pilot program authorized by subsection
8 (a), the Secretary shall enter into partnership agreements
9 with community partners described in subsection (d) using
10 a competitive and merit-based award process for individual
11 grants and for multi-service site grants to test service de-
12 livery efficiencies and generate best practices.

13 (c) COMMUNITY CARE COORDINATION AND SUP-
14 PORTIVE SERVICES.—The focused community care coordi-
15 nation and supportive services referred to in subsection
16 (a) are the following:

17 (1) Services provided by a community partner
18 to improve the well-being and address the needs of
19 disabled veteran families who otherwise lack access
20 to adequate VA or other direct wellness services.

21 Such assistance and services may include the fol-
22 lowing:

23 (A) Care coordination and case manage-
24 ment services.

25 (B) Outreach services.

1 (C) Assistance in obtaining any benefits
2 from the VA which the veteran may be eligible
3 to receive, including, but not limited to, voca-
4 tional and rehabilitation counseling, employ-
5 ment and training service, educational assist-
6 ance, and health care services.

7 (D) Assistance in obtaining and coordi-
8 nating the provision of other public benefits
9 provided in federal, state or local agencies or
10 other community partners, defined in subsection
11 (d), including—

12 (i) marriage counseling;

13 (ii) services for children;

14 (iii) suicide prevention;

15 (iv) substance abuse awareness and
16 treatment;

17 (v) mental health awareness and
18 treatment;

19 (vi) financial counseling;

20 (vii) anger management counseling;

21 (viii) domestic violence awareness and
22 prevention;

23 (ix) employment assistance;

24 (x) transportation services;

25 (xi) child care;

- 1 (xii) housing counseling;
- 2 (xiii) preparing and updating family
- 3 care plans;
- 4 (xiv) development of strategies for liv-
- 5 ing with a veteran with post-traumatic
- 6 stress disorder or traumatic brain injury;
- 7 (xv) accessing emergency financial as-
- 8 sistance through philanthropic efforts; and
- 9 (xvi) other services that are deemed
- 10 appropriate to improve the well-being and
- 11 address the unique needs of disabled vet-
- 12 eran’s families who lack access to adequate
- 13 VA or other direct wellness services and
- 14 supports.

15 (E) Providing direct services, described in

16 subparagraph (D), that are necessary to im-

17 prove the well-being and address the needs of

18 the disabled veteran families but are otherwise

19 unavailable through existing public or private

20 programs.

21 (d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

22 (1) The term “community partner” is a private

23 nonprofit organization.

24 (2) The term “disabled veteran” is as defined

25 a United States citizen or United States national

1 with an honorable discharge from the United States
2 Armed Forces; and is entitled to disability com-
3 pensation (or who but for the receipt of military re-
4 tired pay would be entitled to disability compensa-
5 tion) under laws administered by the Secretary of
6 Veterans Affairs, or was discharged or released from
7 active duty because of a service-connected disability.

8 (3) The term “family” is defined as a depend-
9 ent of the disabled veteran.

10 (e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
11 are authorized to be appropriated to the Department of
12 Veterans Affairs \$2,500,000 for each fiscal year to carry
13 out the pilot program authorized by this section.

14 (f) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days before the
15 completion of the pilot program, the Secretary shall sub-
16 mit to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate
17 and the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of
18 Representatives a report on the results of the pilot pro-
19 gram, including the number of disabled veteran families
20 served and service linkages or referrals and a description
21 and assessment of the effectiveness and achievements of
22 the pilot program with respect to services and treatments
23 and mitigation of risks, including homelessness, unemploy-
24 ment and suicide as well as recommended best practices

- 1 for improving access to supportive services and coordina-
- 2 tion of care for disabled veteran families.

