

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2787

To establish in the Department of Veterans Affairs a pilot program instituting a clinical observation program for pre-med students preparing to attend medical school.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 6, 2017

Ms. KAPTUR (for herself, Mr. JONES, and Mr. RYAN of Ohio) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To establish in the Department of Veterans Affairs a pilot program instituting a clinical observation program for pre-med students preparing to attend medical school.

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-Specific Edu-
5 cation for Tomorrow’s Medical Doctors Act” or the “VET
6 MD Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. PILOT PROGRAM FOR CLINICAL OBSERVATION BY**
2 **PRE-MED STUDENTS.**

3 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of Veterans
4 Affairs shall carry out a pilot program to provide under-
5 graduate students a clinical observation experience at
6 medical centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

7 (b) DURATION.—The Secretary shall carry out the
8 pilot program under subsection (a) for a three-year period
9 beginning not later than August 15, 2020.

10 (c) GOALS.—The Secretary shall ensure that the pilot
11 program under subsection (a) meets the following goals:

12 (1) Increases the awareness, knowledge, and
13 empathy of future medical professionals toward the
14 medical conditions common to veterans.

15 (2) Increases the diversity of the recruitment
16 pool of future physicians of the Department.

17 (3) Provides a diverse clinical observation expe-
18 rience commensurate with the standard expectations
19 for medical school applications.

20 (4) Expands clinical observation opportunities
21 for all students by encouraging students of all back-
22 grounds to consider a career in medicine.

23 (d) MEDICAL CENTER SELECTION.—The Secretary
24 shall select not fewer than five medical centers of the De-
25 partment to carry out the pilot program under subsection
26 (a). In selecting such medical centers, the Secretary shall

1 ensure regional diversity among such selected medical cen-
2 ters.

3 (e) CLINICAL OBSERVATION SESSIONS.—

4 (1) SESSIONS.—The Secretary shall ensure that
5 each medical center of the Department selected
6 under subsection (d) provides clinical observation
7 sessions as follows:

8 (A) Each session shall allow for, to the ex-
9 tent practicable, not fewer than 20 students to
10 participate in the session, which shall consist of
11 not fewer than 60 observational hours.

12 (B) Each center shall carry out three ses-
13 sions per calendar year, from four to six
14 months in duration with minimal overlap.

15 (C) A majority of the observational hours
16 shall be spent observing a practicing physician.
17 The other observational hours shall be spent in
18 a manner that ensures a robust, well rounded
19 experience that exposes the students to a vari-
20 ety of aspects of medical care and health care
21 administration.

22 (2) CONSIDERATION OF AREAS WITH STAFFING
23 SHORTAGES.—In carrying out paragraph (1)(C), the
24 Secretary may consider providing clinical observation
25 sessions with physicians employed in occupations

1 with large staffing shortages, such as occupations
2 relating to women's health and psychiatric care and
3 occupations identified under section 7412 of title 38,
4 United States Code.

5 (f) STUDENTS.—

6 (1) SELECTION.—The Secretary shall select to
7 participate in the pilot program under subsection (a)
8 undergraduate students who are—

9 (A) citizens of the United States; and

10 (B) enrolled in an accredited science or
11 medical program of study.

12 (2) PRIORITY.—In making such selection, the
13 Secretary shall give priority to—

14 (A) students who, at the time of the com-
15 pletion of their secondary education, resided in
16 a health professional shortage area (as defined
17 in section 332 of the Public Health Service Act
18 (42 U.S.C. 254e)); and

19 (B) students who are the first in their im-
20 mediate family to attend an undergraduate in-
21 stitution.

22 (g) OTHER MATTERS.—The Secretary shall—

23 (1) establish a formal status to facilitate the ac-
24 cess to medical centers of the Department by stu-
25 dent observers participating in the pilot program;

1 (2) establish standardized legal, privacy, and
2 ethical requirements for the student observers, in-
3 cluding with respect to—

4 (A) ensuring that no student observer pro-
5 vides any care to patients; and

6 (B) ensuring the suitability of a student to
7 participate in the pilot program to ensure that
8 the student poses no risk to patients;

9 (3) create a standardized application, assess-
10 ment, selection and processing requirements, and
11 procedures for student observers;

12 (4) create an online information page and appli-
13 cation portal on the Internet website of the Depart-
14 ment;

15 (5) identify participating medical centers and
16 clinicians;

17 (6) notify the Committees on Veterans' Affairs
18 of the House of Representatives and the Senate of
19 the medical centers selected under subsection (d) in
20 a timely manner to facilitate program awareness;

21 (7) publish the locations of such centers, and
22 other information on the pilot program, not later
23 than 180 days before the date on which applications
24 are required to be submitted by potential student ob-
25 servers; and

1 (8) establish procedures to follow up with each
2 student observer to ascertain if the student was ac-
3 cepted into medical school.

4 (h) REPORT.—Not later than 60 days before the com-
5 pletion of the pilot program under subsection (a), the Sec-
6 retary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs
7 of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report
8 on the results of the pilot program, including—

9 (1) the number and demographics of all appli-
10 cants, those accepted to participate in the pilot pro-
11 gram, and those who completed the pilot program;
12 and

13 (2) the results of a reflection survey designed
14 by the Secretary to assess the experience of the stu-
15 dent observers.

○