

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 6373

To amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to offer annual preventative health evaluations to veterans with a spinal cord injury or disorder and increase access to assistive technologies, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NOVEMBER 13, 2023

Mr. BERGMAN (for himself, Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. BOST, and Ms. BROWNLEY) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to offer annual preventative health evaluations to veterans with a spinal cord injury or disorder and increase access to assistive technologies, 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,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Veterans Spinal Trau-
5 ma Access to New Devices Act” or the “Veterans STAND
6 Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. PROVISION OF PREVENTATIVE HEALTH EVALUA-**
2 **TIONS FOR VETERANS WITH A SPINAL CORD**
3 **INJURY OR DISORDER.**

4 Section 1706 of title 38, United States Code, is
5 amended by adding at the end the following new sub-
6 section:

7 “(d)(1) In managing the provision of hospital care
8 and medical services under section 1710(a) of this title,
9 the Secretary shall furnish (through direct provision of
10 service, referral, or a telehealth program operated by the
11 Department) a preventative health evaluation annually to
12 any veteran with a spinal cord injury or disorder who
13 elects to undergo the evaluation.

14 “(2) The evaluation described in paragraph (1) shall
15 include the following:

16 “(A) An assessment of any circumstance or
17 condition the veteran is experiencing that indicates
18 a risk for any health complication related to the spi-
19 nal cord injury or disorder, including a risk of
20 comorbidities.

21 “(B) An assessment regarding chronic pain
22 and, if applicable, the management of chronic pain.

23 “(C) An assessment regarding dietary manage-
24 ment and weight management.

25 “(D) An assessment regarding prosthetic equip-
26 ment, including which prosthetic equipment the vet-

1 eran needs, how well any existing prosthetic equip-
2 ment is functioning considering the needs of the vet-
3 eran, and any safety concerns regarding the pros-
4 thetic equipment in use by or recommended to the
5 veteran.

6 “(E) An assessment for the provision of any as-
7 sistive technology that could help maximize the inde-
8 pendence and mobility of the veteran.

9 “(3)(A) In maintaining, prescribing, or amending any
10 guidance, rules, or regulations issued by the Department
11 regarding the requirements set out in this subsection, the
12 Secretary shall consult with the spinal cord injury and dis-
13 order program managers of the Department, clinicians
14 employed by the Department as specialists in spinal cord
15 injuries and disorders, and the organizations named in or
16 approved under section 5902 of this title.

17 “(B) Before issuing any guidance, rules, or regula-
18 tions regarding the requirements set out in this sub-
19 section, the Secretary shall consult with manufacturers of
20 assistive technologies and other entities relevant to the
21 provision of assistive technologies if the guidance, rules,
22 or regulations would directly affect such manufacturers or
23 entities.

24 “(C) The Secretary shall ensure, to the extent pos-
25 sible, that any veteran known by the Secretary to have

1 a spinal cord injury or disorder receives information annu-
2 ally about the evaluation available under this subsection
3 and the benefits to the veteran of choosing to undergo the
4 evaluation.

5 “(4) Not later than one year after the date of the
6 enactment of the Veterans Spinal Trauma Access to New
7 Devices Act, and every two years thereafter, the Secretary
8 shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of
9 the Senate and the House of Representatives a report that
10 includes the following:

11 “(A) For the period covered by the report, the
12 number of veterans who—

13 “(i) received medical care or hospital serv-
14 ices from the Department and used an assistive
15 technology;

16 “(ii) received medical care or hospital serv-
17 ices from the Department and were assessed for
18 the provision of an assistive technology; and

19 “(iii) received medical care or hospital
20 services from the Department and were pre-
21 scribed an assistive technology.

22 “(B) The year-to-year change (for the period
23 covered by the report, including the two years imme-
24 diately prior to year the report is submitted) in the
25 percent of veterans with a spinal cord injury or dis-

1 order who received an evaluation under this sub-
2 section.

3 “(5) In reviewing the performance metrics of a Vet-
4 erans Integrated Service Network for any year beginning
5 after the date that is one year after the date of the enact-
6 ment of the Veterans Spinal Trauma Access to New De-
7 vices Act, the Secretary shall consider the provision of
8 evaluations under paragraph (1).

9 “(6) In this subsection, the term ‘assistive tech-
10 nology’ means a powered medical device or electronic tool
11 used to treat or alleviate symptoms or conditions caused
12 by a spinal cord injury or disorder, including the following:

13 “(A) A personal mobility device, including a
14 powered exoskeleton device.

15 “(B) A speech generating device.”.

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