

Calendar No. 303

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 2533

To improve mammography services furnished by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 29, 2021

Mr. TESTER (for himself, Mr. BOOZMAN, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. COONS, and Ms. STABENOW) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

MARCH 10 (legislative day, MARCH 7), 2022

Reported by Mr. TESTER, with an amendment

[Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the part printed in italic]

A BILL

To improve mammography services furnished by the Department of Veterans Affairs, 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; TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

4 (a) ~~SHORT TITLE.~~—This Act may be cited as the

5 ~~“Making Advances in Mammography and Medical Options~~

6 ~~for Veterans Act”.~~

1 (b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for
 2 this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—SCREENING AND EARLY DETECTION

Sec. 101. Strategic plan for breast imaging services for veterans.

Sec. 102. Telemammography pilot program of Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 103. Upgrade of breast imaging at facilities of Department of Veterans Affairs to three-dimensional digital mammography.

Sec. 104. Study on availability of testing for breast cancer gene among veterans and expansion of availability of such testing.

Sec. 105. Mammography accessibility for paralyzed and disabled veterans.

Sec. 106. Report on access to and quality of mammography screenings furnished by Department of Veterans Affairs.

TITLE II—PARTNERSHIPS FOR RESEARCH AND ACCESS TO CARE

Sec. 201. Partnerships with National Cancer Institute to expand access of veterans to cancer care.

Sec. 202. Report by Department of Veterans Affairs and Department of Defense on interagency collaboration on treating and researching breast cancer.

3 **TITLE I—SCREENING AND** 4 **EARLY DETECTION**

5 **SEC. 101. STRATEGIC PLAN FOR BREAST IMAGING SERVICES FOR VETERANS.** 6

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the
 8 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Vet-
 9 erans Affairs shall submit to the Committee on Veterans'
 10 Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Af-
 11 fairs of the House of Representatives a strategic plan for
 12 improving breast imaging services for veterans.

13 (b) ELEMENTS.—The strategic plan required by sub-
 14 section (a) shall—

15 (1) cover the evolving needs of women veterans;

1 (2) address geographic disparities of breast im-
 2 aging furnished at a facility of the Department of
 3 Veterans Affairs and the use of breast imaging
 4 through non-Department providers in the commu-
 5 nity;

6 (3) address the use of digital breast
 7 tomosynthesis (DBT-3D breast imaging);

8 (4) address the needs of male veterans who re-
 9 quire breast cancer screening services; and

10 (5) provide recommendations on—

11 (A) potential expansion of breast imaging
 12 services furnished at facilities of the Depart-
 13 ment, including infrastructure and staffing
 14 needs;

15 (B) the use of digital breast tomosynthesis;

16 (C) the use of mobile mammography; and

17 (D) other access and equity improvements
 18 for breast imaging.

19 **SEC. 102. TELEMAMMOGRAPHY PILOT PROGRAM OF DE-**
 20 **PARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

21 (a) **IN GENERAL.**—Commencing not later than one
 22 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-
 23 retary of Veterans Affairs shall carry out a pilot program
 24 to provide telemammography services for veterans who live
 25 in—

1 (1) States where the Department of Veterans
2 Affairs does not offer breast imaging services at a
3 facility of the Department; or

4 (2) locations where access to breast imaging
5 services at a facility of the Department is difficult
6 or not feasible, as determined by the Secretary.

7 (b) DURATION.—The Secretary shall carry out the
8 pilot program under subsection (a) for a three-year period
9 beginning on the commencement of the pilot program.

10 (c) LOCATIONS.—In carrying out the pilot program
11 under subsection (a), the Secretary may use community-
12 based outpatient clinics, mobile mammography, Federally
13 qualified health centers (as defined in section 1861(aa)(4)
14 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395x(aa)(4))),
15 rural health clinics, critical access hospitals, clinics of the
16 Indian Health Service, and such other sites as the Sec-
17 retary determines feasible to provide mammograms under
18 the pilot program.

19 (d) SHARING OF IMAGES AND RESULTS.—Under the
20 pilot program under subsection (a)—

21 (1) mammography images generated shall be
22 sent to the centralized tele mammography center of
23 the Department for interpretation by expert radiolo-
24 gists; and

1 (2) results shall be shared with the veteran and
2 their primary care provider.

3 (c) REPORT.—

4 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year
5 after the conclusion of the pilot program under sub-
6 section (a), the Secretary shall submit to the Com-
7 mittee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the
8 Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of
9 Representatives a report evaluating the pilot pro-
10 gram.

11 (2) ELEMENTS.—The report required by para-
12 graph (1) shall include the following:

13 (A) An assessment of the quality of the
14 mammography provided under the pilot pro-
15 gram under subsection (a).

16 (B) Feedback from veterans and providers
17 participating in the pilot program.

18 (C) A recommendation of the Secretary on
19 the continuation or discontinuation of the pilot
20 program.

1 **SEC. 103. UPGRADE OF BREAST IMAGING AT FACILITIES OF**
 2 **DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO**
 3 **THREE-DIMENSIONAL DIGITAL MAMMOG-**
 4 **RAPHY.**

5 Not later than two years after the date of the enact-
 6 ment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall—

7 (1) upgrade all mammography services at facili-
 8 ties of the Department of Veterans Affairs that pro-
 9 vide such services to use digital breast tomosynthesis
 10 technology, also known as three-dimensional breast
 11 imaging; and

12 (2) submit to the Committee on Veterans' Af-
 13 fairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans'
 14 Affairs of the House of Representatives a report—

15 (A) indicating that the upgrade under
 16 paragraph (1) has been completed; and

17 (B) listing the facilities or other locations
 18 of the Department at which digital breast
 19 tomosynthesis technology is used.

20 **SEC. 104. STUDY ON AVAILABILITY OF TESTING FOR**
 21 **BREAST CANCER GENE AMONG VETERANS**
 22 **AND EXPANSION OF AVAILABILITY OF SUCH**
 23 **TESTING.**

24 (a) STUDY.—

25 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans
 26 Affairs shall conduct a study on the availability of

1 access to testing for the breast cancer gene for vet-
2 erans diagnosed with breast cancer, as recommended
3 by the guidelines set forth by the National Com-
4 prehensive Cancer Network.

5 (2) ELEMENTS.—In conducting the study under
6 paragraph (1), the Secretary shall examine—

7 (A) the feasibility of expanding the Joint
8 Medicine Service of the Department of Veterans
9 Affairs to provide genetic testing and coun-
10 seling for veterans with breast cancer across the
11 country; and

12 (B) access to such testing and counseling
13 for veterans living in rural or highly rural
14 areas; and any gaps that may exist with respect
15 to such access.

16 (b) EXPANSION OF AVAILABILITY OF TESTING.—

17 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall update
18 guidelines or institute new guidelines to increase the
19 use of testing for the breast cancer gene and genetic
20 counseling for veterans diagnosed with breast can-
21 cer.

22 (2) DECISION SUPPORT TOOLS.—In updating or
23 instituting guidelines under paragraph (1), the Sec-
24 retary may develop clinical decision support tools to

1 facilitate delivery of breast cancer care that is in line
2 with national cancer guidelines.

3 (c) REPORT.—Not later than two years after the date
4 of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit
5 to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and
6 the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Rep-
7 resentatives a report on—

8 (1) the results of the study under subsection
9 (a);

10 (2) any updates to guidelines or new guidelines
11 instituted under subsection (b); and

12 (3) any progress of the Department in improv-
13 ing access to and usage of testing for the breast can-
14 cer gene among veterans diagnosed with breast can-
15 cer, including for veterans living in rural or highly
16 rural areas.

17 (d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section, the terms “rural”
18 and “highly rural” have the meanings given those terms
19 in the Rural-Urban Commuting Areas coding system of
20 the Department of Agriculture.

21 **SEC. 105. MAMMOGRAPHY ACCESSIBILITY FOR PARALYZED**
22 **AND DISABLED VETERANS.**

23 (a) STUDY.—

24 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans
25 Affairs shall conduct a study on the accessibility of

1 breast imaging services at facilities of the Depart-
2 ment of Veterans Affairs for veterans with paralysis,
3 spinal cord injury or disorder (SCI/D), or another
4 disability.

5 (2) ACCESSIBILITY.—The study required by
6 paragraph (1) shall include an assessment of the ac-
7 cessibility of the physical infrastructure at breast
8 imaging facilities of the Department, including the
9 imaging equipment, transfer assistance, and the
10 room in which services will be provided as well as
11 adherence to best practices for screening and treat-
12 ing veterans with a spinal cord injury or disorder.

13 (3) SCREENING RATES.—

14 (A) MEASUREMENT.—The study required
15 by paragraph (1) shall include a measurement
16 of breast cancer screening rates for veterans
17 with a spinal cord injury or disorder during the
18 two-year period preceding the commencement of
19 the study, including a breakout of the screening
20 rates for such veterans living in rural or highly
21 rural areas.

22 (B) DEVELOPMENT OF METHOD.—If the
23 Secretary is unable to provide the measurement
24 required under subparagraph (A), the Secretary
25 shall develop a method to track breast cancer

1 screening rates for veterans with a spinal cord
2 injury or disorder.

3 ~~(4) REPORT.~~—Not later than two years after
4 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary
5 shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs
6 of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Af-
7 fairs of the House of Representatives a report on the
8 findings of the study required by paragraph (1), in-
9 cluding—

10 ~~(A)~~ the rates of screening among veterans
11 with a spinal cord injury or disorder, including
12 veterans living in rural or highly rural areas, as
13 required under paragraph ~~(3)~~(A); or

14 ~~(B)~~ if such rates are not available, a de-
15 scription of the method developed to measure
16 such rates as required under paragraph ~~(3)~~(B).

17 ~~(b) CARE FROM NON-DEPARTMENT PROVIDERS.~~—
18 The Secretary shall update the policies and directives of
19 the Department to ensure that, in referring a veteran with
20 a spinal cord injury or disorder for care from a non-De-
21 partment provider, the Secretary shall—

22 ~~(1)~~ confirm with the provider the accessibility
23 of the breast imaging site, including the imaging
24 equipment, transfer assistance, and the room in
25 which services will be provided; and

1 (2) the quality of such screenings and reading
2 of the images from such screenings, including wheth-
3 er such screenings use three-dimensional mammog-
4 raphy;

5 (3) the communication of the results of such
6 screenings, including whether results are shared in a
7 timely manner, whether results are shared via the
8 Joint Health Information Exchange or another elec-
9 tronic mechanism, and whether results are incor-
10 porated into the electronic health record of the vet-
11 eran;

12 (4) the performance of the Women's Breast On-
13 cology System of Excellence of the Department; and

14 (5) the access of veterans diagnosed with breast
15 cancer to a comprehensive breast cancer care team
16 of the Department.

17 (e) FOLLOW-UP.—Not later than 180 days after the
18 submittal of the report under subsection (a), the Secretary
19 shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the
20 Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the
21 House of Representatives a plan to address the defi-
22 ciencies identified in the report under subsection (a), if
23 any.

1 **TITLE II—PARTNERSHIPS FOR**
2 **RESEARCH AND ACCESS TO**
3 **CARE**

4 **SEC. 201. PARTNERSHIPS WITH NATIONAL CANCER INSTI-**
5 **TUTE TO EXPAND ACCESS OF VETERANS TO**
6 **CANCER CARE.**

7 (a) ACCESS TO CARE IN EACH VISN.—

8 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans
9 Affairs shall enter into a partnership with not fewer
10 than one cancer center of the National Cancer Insti-
11 tute of the National Institutes of Health in each
12 Veterans Integrated Service Network of the Depart-
13 ment of Veterans Affairs to expand access to high-
14 quality cancer care for women veterans.

15 (2) TREATMENT OF RURAL VETERANS.—The
16 Secretary, in carrying out partnerships entered into
17 under paragraph (1), shall ensure that veterans with
18 breast cancer who reside in rural areas or States
19 without a cancer center that has entered into such
20 a partnership with the Secretary are able to receive
21 care through such a partnership via telehealth.

22 (b) REPORT ON PARTNERSHIP TO INCREASE ACCESS
23 TO CLINICAL TRIALS.—Not later than 180 days after the
24 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall sub-
25 mit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate

1 and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of
2 Representatives a report—

3 (1) how the Secretary will ensure that the ad-
4 vancements made through the existing partnership
5 between the Department of Veterans Affairs and the
6 National Cancer Institute to provide veterans with
7 access to clinical cancer research trials (commonly
8 referred to as “NAVIGATE”) are permanently im-
9 plemented; and

10 (2) the determination of the Secretary of
11 whether expansion of such partnership to more than
12 the original 12 facilities of the Department that
13 were selected under such partnership is feasible.

14 (c) PERIODIC REPORTS.—Not later than three years
15 after the date of the enactment of this Act, and every
16 three years thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to the
17 Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the
18 Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Rep-
19 resentatives a report—

20 (1) assessing how the partnerships entered into
21 under subsection (a)(1) have impacted access by vet-
22 erans to cancer centers of the National Cancer Insti-
23 tute, including an assessment of the telehealth op-
24 tions made available and used pursuant to such
25 partnerships; and

1 (2) describing the advancements made with re-
 2 spect to access by veterans to clinical cancer re-
 3 search trials through the partnership described in
 4 subsection (b)(1), including how many of those vet-
 5 erans were women veterans, minority veterans (in-
 6 cluding racial and ethnic minorities), and rural vet-
 7 erans, and identifying opportunities for further inno-
 8 vation.

9 **SEC. 202. REPORT BY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**
 10 **AND DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE ON INTER-**
 11 **AGENCY COLLABORATION ON TREATING AND**
 12 **RESEARCHING BREAST CANCER.**

13 (a) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 180 days after the
 14 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Vet-
 15 erans Affairs, in collaboration with the Secretary of De-
 16 fense, shall submit to Congress a report on all current re-
 17 search and health care collaborations between the Depart-
 18 ment of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense
 19 on treating veterans and members of the Armed Forces
 20 with breast cancer.

21 (b) **ELEMENTS.**—The report required by subsection

22 (a)—

23 (1) shall include a description of potential op-
 24 portunities for future interagency collaboration be-
 25 tween the Department of Veterans Affairs and the

1 Department of Defense with respect to treating and
 2 researching breast cancer; and

3 ~~(2)~~ may include a focus on—

4 (A) with respect to women members of the
 5 Armed Forces with a diagnosis of or who are
 6 undergoing screening for breast cancer, transi-
 7 tion of such members from receiving care from
 8 the Department of Defense to receiving care
 9 from the Department of Veterans Affairs;

10 (B) collaborative breast cancer research
 11 opportunities between the Department of Vet-
 12 erans Affairs and the Department of Defense;

13 (C) access to clinical trials; and

14 (D) such other matters as the Secretary of
 15 Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of Defense
 16 consider appropriate.

17 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

18 (a) *SHORT TITLE.*—*This Act may be cited as the*
 19 *“Making Advances in Mammography and Medical Options*
 20 *for Veterans Act”.*

21 (b) *TABLE OF CONTENTS.*—*The table of contents for*
 22 *this Act is as follows:*

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—SCREENING AND EARLY DETECTION

Sec. 101. Strategic plan for breast imaging services for veterans.

Sec. 102. Telescreening mammography pilot program of Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 103. *Upgrade of breast imaging at facilities of Department of Veterans Affairs to three-dimensional digital mammography.*

Sec. 104. *Study on availability of testing for breast cancer gene among veterans and expansion of availability of such testing.*

Sec. 105. *Mammography accessibility for paralyzed and disabled veterans.*

Sec. 106. *Report on access to and quality of mammography screenings furnished by Department of Veterans Affairs.*

TITLE II—PARTNERSHIPS FOR RESEARCH AND ACCESS TO CARE

Sec. 201. *Partnerships with National Cancer Institute to expand access of veterans to cancer care.*

Sec. 202. *Report by Department of Veterans Affairs and Department of Defense on interagency collaboration on treating and researching breast cancer.*

**1 TITLE I—SCREENING AND EARLY
2 DETECTION**

**3 SEC. 101. STRATEGIC PLAN FOR BREAST IMAGING SERV-
4 ICES FOR VETERANS.**

5 (a) *IN GENERAL.*—Not later than one year after the
6 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans
7 Affairs shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs
8 of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of
9 the House of Representatives a strategic plan for improving
10 breast imaging services for veterans.

11 (b) *ELEMENTS.*—The strategic plan required by sub-
12 section (a) shall—

13 (1) *cover the evolving needs of women veterans;*

14 (2) *address geographic disparities of breast im-
15 aging furnished at a facility of the Department of
16 Veterans Affairs and the use of breast imaging
17 through non-Department providers in the community;*

1 (3) address the use of digital breast
2 tomosynthesis (DBT–3D breast imaging);

3 (4) address the needs of male veterans who re-
4 quire breast cancer screening services; and

5 (5) provide recommendations on—

6 (A) potential expansion of breast imaging
7 services furnished at facilities of the Department,
8 including infrastructure and staffing needs;

9 (B) the use of digital breast tomosynthesis;

10 (C) the use of mobile mammography; and

11 (D) other access and equity improvements
12 for breast imaging.

13 **SEC. 102. TELESCREENING MAMMOGRAPHY PILOT PRO-**
14 **GRAM OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AF-**
15 **FAIRS.**

16 (a) *IN GENERAL.*—Commencing not later than 18
17 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-
18 retary of Veterans Affairs shall carry out a pilot program
19 to provide telescreening mammography services for veterans
20 who live in—

21 (1) States where the Department of Veterans Af-
22 fairs does not offer breast imaging services at a facil-
23 ity of the Department; or

1 (2) *locations where access to breast imaging serv-*
2 *ices at a facility of the Department is difficult or not*
3 *feasible, as determined by the Secretary.*

4 (b) *DURATION.*—*The Secretary shall carry out the*
5 *pilot program under subsection (a) for a three-year period*
6 *beginning on the commencement of the pilot program.*

7 (c) *LOCATIONS.*—*In carrying out the pilot program*
8 *under subsection (a), the Secretary may use community-*
9 *based outpatient clinics, mobile mammography, Federally*
10 *qualified health centers (as defined in section 1861(aa)(4)*
11 *of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395x(aa)(4))), rural*
12 *health clinics, critical access hospitals, clinics of the Indian*
13 *Health Service, and such other sites as the Secretary deter-*
14 *mines feasible to provide mammograms under the pilot pro-*
15 *gram.*

16 (d) *SHARING OF IMAGES AND RESULTS.*—*Under the*
17 *pilot program under subsection (a)—*

18 (1) *mammography images generated shall be sent*
19 *to a telescreening mammography center of the Depart-*
20 *ment for interpretation by qualified radiologists; and*

21 (2) *results shall be shared with the veteran and*
22 *their primary care provider in accordance with poli-*
23 *cies established by the Secretary.*

24 (e) *REPORT.*—

1 (1) *IN GENERAL.*—Not later than one year after
2 the conclusion of the pilot program under subsection
3 (a), the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on
4 Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on
5 Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a re-
6 port evaluating the pilot program.

7 (2) *ELEMENTS.*—The report required by para-
8 graph (1) shall include the following:

9 (A) *An assessment of the quality of the*
10 *mammography provided under the pilot program*
11 *under subsection (a).*

12 (B) *Feedback from veterans and providers*
13 *participating in the pilot program.*

14 (C) *A recommendation of the Secretary on*
15 *the continuation or discontinuation of the pilot*
16 *program.*

17 **SEC. 103. UPGRADE OF BREAST IMAGING AT FACILITIES OF**
18 **DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO**
19 **THREE-DIMENSIONAL DIGITAL MAMMOG-**
20 **RAPHY.**

21 *Not later than two years after the date of the enact-*
22 *ment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall—*

23 (1) *upgrade all mammography services at facili-*
24 *ties of the Department of Veterans Affairs that pro-*
25 *vide such services to use digital breast tomosynthesis*

1 *technology, also known as three-dimensional breast*
2 *imaging; and*

3 (2) *submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs*
4 *of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs*
5 *of the House of Representatives a report—*

6 (A) *indicating that the upgrade under*
7 *paragraph (1) has been completed; and*

8 (B) *listing the facilities or other locations of*
9 *the Department at which digital breast*
10 *tomosynthesis technology is used.*

11 **SEC. 104. STUDY ON AVAILABILITY OF TESTING FOR**
12 **BREAST CANCER GENE AMONG VETERANS**
13 **AND EXPANSION OF AVAILABILITY OF SUCH**
14 **TESTING.**

15 (a) *STUDY.—*

16 (1) *IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Af-*
17 *fairs shall conduct a study on the availability of ac-*
18 *cess to testing for the breast cancer gene for veterans*
19 *diagnosed with breast cancer, as recommended by the*
20 *guidelines set forth by the National Comprehensive*
21 *Cancer Network.*

22 (2) *ELEMENTS.—In conducting the study under*
23 *paragraph (1), the Secretary shall examine—*

24 (A) *the feasibility of expanding the Joint*
25 *Medicine Service of the Department of Veterans*

1 *Affairs to provide genetic testing and counseling*
2 *for veterans with breast cancer across the coun-*
3 *try; and*

4 *(B) access to such testing and counseling for*
5 *veterans living in rural or highly rural areas,*
6 *and any gaps that may exist with respect to*
7 *such access.*

8 *(b) EXPANSION OF AVAILABILITY OF TESTING.—*

9 *(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall update*
10 *guidelines or institute new guidelines to increase the*
11 *use of molecular testing and genetic counseling for*
12 *veterans diagnosed with breast cancer, including vet-*
13 *erans living in rural or highly rural areas.*

14 *(2) DECISION SUPPORT TOOLS.—In updating or*
15 *instituting guidelines under paragraph (1), the Sec-*
16 *retary may develop clinical decision support tools,*
17 *such as clinical pathways, to facilitate delivery of*
18 *breast cancer care that is in line with national cancer*
19 *guidelines.*

20 *(c) REPORT.—Not later than two years after the date*
21 *of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to*
22 *the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the*
23 *Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representa-*
24 *tives a report on—*

25 *(1) the results of the study under subsection (a);*

1 aging facilities of the Department, including the im-
2 aging equipment, transfer assistance, and the room in
3 which services will be provided as well as adherence
4 to best practices for screening and treating veterans
5 with a spinal cord injury or disorder.

6 (3) *SCREENING RATES.*—

7 (A) *MEASUREMENT.*—The study required by
8 paragraph (1) shall include a measurement of
9 breast cancer screening rates for veterans with a
10 spinal cord injury or disorder during the two-
11 year period preceding the commencement of the
12 study, including a breakout of the screening rates
13 for such veterans living in rural or highly rural
14 areas.

15 (B) *DEVELOPMENT OF METHOD.*—If the
16 Secretary is unable to provide the measurement
17 required under subparagraph (A), the Secretary
18 shall develop a method to track breast cancer
19 screening rates for veterans with a spinal cord
20 injury or disorder.

21 (4) *REPORT.*—Not later than two years after the
22 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall
23 submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the
24 Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the

1 *House of Representatives a report on the findings of*
2 *the study required by paragraph (1), including—*

3 *(A) the rates of screening among veterans*
4 *with a spinal cord injury or disorder, including*
5 *veterans living in rural or highly rural areas, as*
6 *required under paragraph (3)(A); or*

7 *(B) if such rates are not available, a de-*
8 *scription of the method developed to measure*
9 *such rates as required under paragraph (3)(B).*

10 *(b) CARE FROM NON-DEPARTMENT PROVIDERS.—The*
11 *Secretary shall update the policies and directives of the De-*
12 *partment to ensure that, in referring a veteran with a spi-*
13 *nal cord injury or disorder for care from a non-Department*
14 *provider, the Secretary shall—*

15 *(1) confirm with the provider the accessibility of*
16 *the breast imaging site, including the imaging equip-*
17 *ment, transfer assistance, and the room in which serv-*
18 *ices will be provided; and*

19 *(2) provide additional information to the pro-*
20 *vider on best practices for screening and treating vet-*
21 *erans with a spinal cord injury or disorder.*

22 *(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section, the terms “rural”*
23 *and “highly rural” have the meanings given those terms*
24 *in the Rural-Urban Commuting Areas coding system of the*
25 *Department of Agriculture.*

1 **SEC. 106. REPORT ON ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF MAM-**
2 **MOGRAPHY SCREENINGS FURNISHED BY DE-**
3 **PARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

4 (a) *IN GENERAL.*—Not later than two years after the
5 date of the enactment of this Act, the Inspector General of
6 the Department of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Sec-
7 retary of Veterans Affairs, the Committee on Veterans' Af-
8 fairs of the Senate, and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs
9 of the House of Representatives a report on mammography
10 services furnished by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

11 (b) *ELEMENTS.*—The report required by subsection (a)
12 shall include an assessment of—

13 (1) *the access of veterans to mammography*
14 *screenings, whether at a facility of the Department or*
15 *through a non-Department provider, including any*
16 *staffing concerns of the Department in providing such*
17 *screenings;*

18 (2) *the quality of such screenings and reading of*
19 *the images from such screenings, including whether*
20 *such screenings use three-dimensional mammography;*

21 (3) *the communication of the results of such*
22 *screenings, including whether results are shared in a*
23 *timely manner, whether results are shared via the*
24 *Joint Health Information Exchange or another elec-*
25 *tronic mechanism, and whether results are incor-*

1 *porated into the electronic health record of the vet-*
 2 *eran;*

3 *(4) the performance of the Women’s Breast On-*
 4 *cology System of Excellence of the Department; and*

5 *(5) the access of veterans diagnosed with breast*
 6 *cancer to a comprehensive breast cancer care team of*
 7 *the Department.*

8 *(c) FOLLOW-UP.—Not later than 180 days after the*
 9 *submittal of the report under subsection (a), the Secretary*
 10 *shall submit to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the*
 11 *Senate and the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the House*
 12 *of Representatives a plan to address the deficiencies identi-*
 13 *fied in the report under subsection (a), if any.*

14 **TITLE II—PARTNERSHIPS FOR**
 15 **RESEARCH AND ACCESS TO**
 16 **CARE**

17 **SEC. 201. PARTNERSHIPS WITH NATIONAL CANCER INSTI-**
 18 **TUTE TO EXPAND ACCESS OF VETERANS TO**
 19 **CANCER CARE.**

20 *(a) ACCESS TO CARE IN EACH VISN.—*

21 *(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Af-*
 22 *fairs shall enter into a partnership with not fewer*
 23 *than one cancer center of the National Cancer Insti-*
 24 *tute of the National Institutes of Health in each Vet-*
 25 *erans Integrated Service Network of the Department*

1 *of Veterans Affairs to expand access to high-quality*
2 *cancer care for women veterans.*

3 (2) *TREATMENT OF RURAL VETERANS.*—*The Sec-*
4 *retary, in carrying out partnerships entered into*
5 *under paragraph (1), shall ensure that veterans with*
6 *breast cancer who reside in rural areas or States*
7 *without a cancer center that has entered into such a*
8 *partnership with the Secretary are able to receive care*
9 *through such a partnership via telehealth.*

10 (b) *REPORT ON PARTNERSHIP TO INCREASE ACCESS*
11 *TO CLINICAL TRIALS.*—*Not later than 180 days after the*
12 *date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit*
13 *to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and*
14 *the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Rep-*
15 *resentatives a report on—*

16 (1) *how the Secretary will ensure that the ad-*
17 *vancements made through the existing partnership be-*
18 *tween the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Na-*
19 *tional Cancer Institute to provide veterans with ac-*
20 *cess to clinical cancer research trials (commonly re-*
21 *ferred to as "NAVIGATE") are permanently imple-*
22 *mented; and*

23 (2) *the determination of the Secretary of whether*
24 *expansion of such partnership to more than the origi-*

1 *nal 12 facilities of the Department that were selected*
2 *under such partnership is feasible.*

3 *(c) PERIODIC REPORTS.—Not later than three years*
4 *after the date of the enactment of this Act, and every three*
5 *years thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to the Com-*
6 *mittee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee*
7 *on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a re-*
8 *port—*

9 *(1) assessing how the partnerships entered into*
10 *under subsection (a)(1) have impacted access by vet-*
11 *erans to cancer centers of the National Cancer Insti-*
12 *tute, including an assessment of the telehealth options*
13 *made available and used pursuant to such partner-*
14 *ships; and*

15 *(2) describing the advancements made with re-*
16 *spect to access by veterans to clinical cancer research*
17 *trials through the partnership described in subsection*
18 *(b)(1), including how many of those veterans were*
19 *women veterans, minority veterans (including racial*
20 *and ethnic minorities), and rural veterans, and iden-*
21 *tifying opportunities for further innovation.*

1 **SEC. 202. REPORT BY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**
2 **AND DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE ON INTER-**
3 **AGENCY COLLABORATION ON TREATING AND**
4 **RESEARCHING BREAST CANCER.**

5 (a) *IN GENERAL.*—Not later than 180 days after the
6 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans
7 Affairs, in collaboration with the Secretary of Defense, shall
8 submit to Congress a report on all current research and
9 health care collaborations between the Department of Vet-
10 erans Affairs and the Department of Defense on treating
11 veterans and members of the Armed Forces with breast can-
12 cer.

13 (b) *ELEMENTS.*—The report required by subsection
14 (a)—

15 (1) shall include a description of potential op-
16 portunities for future interagency collaboration be-
17 tween the Department of Veterans Affairs and the De-
18 partment of Defense with respect to treating and re-
19 searching breast cancer; and

20 (2) may include a focus on—

21 (A) with respect to women members of the
22 Armed Forces with a diagnosis of or who are un-
23 dergoing screening for breast cancer, transition
24 of such members from receiving care from the
25 Department of Defense to receiving care from the
26 Department of Veterans Affairs;

1 (B) collaborative breast cancer research op-
2 portunities between the Department of Veterans
3 Affairs and the Department of Defense;

4 (C) access to clinical trials; and

5 (D) such other matters as the Secretary of
6 Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of Defense
7 consider appropriate.

Calendar No. 303

117TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

S. 2533

A BILL

To improve mammography services furnished by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

MARCH 10 (legislative day, MARCH 7), 2022

Reported with an amendment