

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 5035

To amend title 38, United States Code, to establish an external provider scheduling program to assist the Department of Veterans Affairs in scheduling appointments for care and services under the Veterans Community Care Program, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 12, 2024

Mr. MORAN (for himself and Mrs. FISCHER) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to establish an external provider scheduling program to assist the Department of Veterans Affairs in scheduling appointments for care and services under the Veterans Community Care Program, 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. EXTERNAL PROVIDER SCHEDULING PROGRAM**

4 **OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

5 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—

6 (1) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter I of chapter 17
7 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by in-

1 serting after section 1703F the following new sec-
2 tion:

3 **“§ 1703G. External Provider Scheduling Program**

4 “(a) IN GENERAL.—There is established within the
5 Department a national External Provider Scheduling Pro-
6 gram (in this section referred to as the ‘Program’) to as-
7 sist the Department in scheduling appointments for care
8 and services under the Veterans Community Care Pro-
9 gram under section 1703 of this title.

10 “(b) ELEMENTS OF PROGRAM.—The Program shall
11 consist of technology that allows schedulers of the Depart-
12 ment to view the schedules of health care providers partici-
13 pating in the Veterans Community Care Program under
14 section 1703 of this title and schedule, in real-time, ap-
15 pointments for care and services under such section.

16 “(c) USE OF CONTRACTS.—The Secretary shall carry
17 out the Program through an existing contract entered into
18 by the Department, if feasible, or a new contract.

19 “(d) REDUCTION IN WAIT TIMES.—The Secretary
20 shall ensure that the Program—

21 “(1) reduces the time (measured in days) from
22 referral of veterans to health care providers under
23 the Veterans Community Care Program under sec-
24 tion 1703 of this title to the actual scheduling of ap-

1 pointments for care or services under such section;
2 and

3 “(2) reduces the time (measured in days and
4 hours) for schedulers of the Department to schedule
5 appointments for care or services under such section.

6 “(e) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than September
7 30 of each year through 2028, the Secretary shall submit
8 to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and
9 the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Rep-
10 resentatives a report on the progress of the Secretary in
11 establishing the Program.”.

12 (2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sec-
13 tions at the beginning of chapter 17 of title 38,
14 United States Code, is amended by inserting after
15 the item relating to section 1703F the following new
16 item:

“1703G. External Provider Scheduling Program.”.

17 (b) AVAILABILITY OF PROGRAM.—The Secretary of
18 Veterans Affairs shall ensure that the national External
19 Provider Scheduling Program established under section
20 1703G of title 38, United States Code, as added by sub-
21 section (a)(1), is available to all medical centers of the
22 Department of Veterans Affairs by not later than Sep-
23 tember 30, 2025.

24 (c) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 1703 of
25 title 38, United States Code, is amended—

1 (1) in subsection (a)(2)(A), by inserting “, in-
2 cluding pursuant to the program under section
3 1703G of this title,” after “medical appointments”;
4 and

5 (2) in subsection (h)(2)(B), by inserting “, in-
6 cluding pursuant to the program under section
7 1703G of this title” before the period at the end.

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