

116TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. R. 8147

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to expand an existing pilot program, and to establish a new pilot program, related to complementary and integrative health services for veterans.

---

## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 1, 2020

Mr. LAMB (for himself and Mr. FITZPATRICK) introduced the following bill;  
which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

---

## A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to expand an existing pilot program, and to establish a new pilot program, related to complementary and integrative health services for 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. SHORT TITLE.**

4       This Act may be cited as the “Testing, Researching,  
5       and Expanding Alternative Treatments Act” or the  
6       “TREAT Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. EXPANSION OF CERTAIN COMPLEMENTARY AND IN-**  
2 **TEGRATIVE HEALTH SERVICES.**

3 (a) **PLAN REQUIRED.**—Not later than 180 days after  
4 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of  
5 Veterans Affairs shall develop a plan to expand the pilot  
6 program under section 933 of the Jason Simeakoski Me-  
7 morial and Promise Act (title IX of Public Law 114–198;  
8 38 U.S.C. 1701 note).

9 (b) **ASSESSMENT; ELEMENTS.**—The plan under sub-  
10 section (a) shall include provisions for assessing the imple-  
11 mentation of the plan and the effectiveness of services and  
12 programs described in subsection (f) of that section 933,  
13 including—

14 (1) the use and efficacy of complementary and  
15 integrative health services delivered through the pilot  
16 program for addressing mental health, pain manage-  
17 ment, and treatment of chronic illness;

18 (2) the outreach conducted by the Secretary to  
19 inform veterans and community organizations of  
20 such services; and

21 (3) the experiences of veterans who received  
22 such services.

23 (c) **TREATMENTS DESCRIBED.**—Complementary and  
24 integrative health treatments described in this subsection  
25 shall consist of the following:

26 (1) Yoga.

1           (2) Meditation.

2           (3) Acupuncture.

3           (4) Chiropractic care.

4           (5) Other treatments that show sufficient evi-  
5           dence of efficacy at treating mental or physical  
6           health conditions, as determined by the Secretary.

7           (d) IMPLEMENTATION.—Not later than 270 days  
8           after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary  
9           shall implement the plan under subsection (a).

10          (e) REPORT.—Not later than two years after the date  
11          of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit  
12          to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and  
13          House of Representatives a report on activities carried out  
14          under this section, including—

15                (1) the assessment under subsection (b);

16                (2) implementation under subsection (d); and

17                (3) such recommendations regarding the fur-  
18                nishing of complementary and integrative health  
19                treatments described in subsection (c) the Secretary  
20                determines appropriate.

1 **SEC. 3. PILOT PROGRAM TO PROVIDE VETERANS ACCESS**  
2 **TO COMPLEMENTARY AND INTEGRATIVE**  
3 **HEALTH SERVICES THROUGH ANIMAL THER-**  
4 **APY, AGRITHERAPY, AND ADAPTIVE SPORTS,**  
5 **RECREATION, AND OUTDOOR ADVENTURE.**

6 (a) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 180 days after the  
7 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Vet-  
8 erans Affairs shall commence the conduct of a pilot pro-  
9 gram to provide complementary and integrative health  
10 services described in subsection (b) to eligible veterans  
11 from the Department of Veterans Affairs or through the  
12 use of non-Department entities for the treatment of post-  
13 traumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety, or other  
14 conditions as determined by the Secretary.

15 (b) **TREATMENTS DESCRIBED.**—Complementary and  
16 integrative health treatments described in this subsection  
17 shall consist of the following:

- 18 (1) Equine assisted therapy.
- 19 (2) Other animal therapy.
- 20 (3) Agritherapy.
- 21 (4) Post-traumatic growth programming.
- 22 (5) Adaptive sports, recreation, and outdoor ad-  
23 venture.

24 (c) **ELIGIBLE VETERANS.**—A veteran is eligible to  
25 participate in the pilot program under this section if the  
26 veteran—

1           (1) is enrolled in the system of patient enroll-  
2           ment of the Department under section 1705(a) of  
3           title 38, United States Code; and

4           (2) during the two-year period preceding the  
5           initial participation of the veteran in the pilot pro-  
6           gram—

7                   (A) has received health care under the laws  
8                   administered by the Secretary; or

9                   (B) has received rehabilitation and coun-  
10                  seling services from a Vet Center.

11          (d) DURATION.—

12               (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall carry  
13               out the pilot program under this section for a three-  
14               year period beginning on the commencement of the  
15               pilot program.

16               (2) EXTENSION.—The Secretary may extend  
17               the duration of the pilot program under this section  
18               if the Secretary, based on the results of the interim  
19               report submitted under subsection (f)(1), determines  
20               that it is appropriate to do so.

21          (e) LOCATIONS.—

22               (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall select  
23               not fewer than five facilities of the Department at  
24               which to carry out the pilot program under this sec-  
25               tion.

1           (2) SELECTION CRITERIA.—In selecting facili-  
2 ties under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall ensure  
3 that—

4                   (A) the locations are in geographically di-  
5 verse areas; and

6                   (B) not fewer than three facilities serve  
7 veterans in rural or highly rural areas (as de-  
8 termined through the use of the Rural-Urban  
9 Commuting Areas coding system of the Depart-  
10 ment of Agriculture).

11       (f) RESEARCH ON EFFECTIVENESS OF TREAT-  
12 MENT.—

13           (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall carry  
14 out the pilot program in conjunction with academic  
15 researchers affiliated with the Department of Vet-  
16 erans Affairs, including through agreements under  
17 paragraph (2), in order for those researchers to  
18 study the effectiveness of the treatments described  
19 in subsection (b).

20           (2) AGREEMENTS.—Before commencing the  
21 pilot program, the Secretary shall seek to enter into  
22 agreements with academic researchers to ensure ro-  
23 bust data collection and gathering procedures are in  
24 place under the pilot program in order to produce  
25 peer-reviewed journal articles.

1 (g) REPORTS.—

2 (1) INTERIM REPORT.—

3 (A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year  
4 after the commencement of the pilot program  
5 under this section, the Secretary shall submit to  
6 the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Sen-  
7 ate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of  
8 the House of Representatives a report on the  
9 progress of the pilot program.

10 (B) ELEMENTS.—The report required by  
11 subparagraph (A) shall include the following:

12 (i) The number of participants in the  
13 pilot program.

14 (ii) The type or types of therapy of-  
15 fered at each facility at which the pilot  
16 program is being carried out.

17 (iii) An assessment of whether partici-  
18 pation by a veteran in the pilot program  
19 resulted in any changes in clinically rel-  
20 evant endpoints for the veteran with re-  
21 spect to the conditions specified in sub-  
22 section (a).

23 (iv) An assessment of effect on quality  
24 of life and well-being of veterans partici-  
25 pating in the pilot program, including the

1 results of a satisfaction survey of the par-  
2 ticipants in the pilot program,  
3 disaggregated by treatment under sub-  
4 section (b).

5 (v) An assessment of whether the pilot  
6 program is effective in increasing the ad-  
7 herence of veterans to mental health treat-  
8 ment for the conditions described in sub-  
9 section (a).

10 (vi) The determination of the Sec-  
11 retary with respect to extending the pilot  
12 program under subsection (d)(2).

13 (vii) Any recommendations of the Sec-  
14 retary with respect to expanding the pilot  
15 program.

16 (2) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than 90 days  
17 after the termination of the pilot program under this  
18 section, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee  
19 on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Com-  
20 mittee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Rep-  
21 resentatives a final report on the pilot program.

○