

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 4009

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 SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 21, 2024

Mr. MORAN (for himself and Mr. TESTER) 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 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 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter II of chapter 17 of
5 title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting after
6 section 1712C the following new section:

7 **“§ 1713. Preventative health evaluations for veterans**
8 **with a spinal cord injury or disorder**

9 “(a) HEALTH EVALUATIONS.—The Secretary shall
10 furnish (through direct provision of service, referral, or a
11 telehealth program operated by the Department) a pre-
12 ventative health evaluation annually to any veteran with
13 a spinal cord injury or disorder who elects to undergo the
14 evaluation.

15 “(b) ASSESSMENTS.—The evaluation described in
16 subsection (a) shall include the following:

17 “(1) An assessment of any circumstance or con-
18 dition the veteran is experiencing that indicates a
19 risk for any health complication related to a spinal
20 cord injury or disorder, including a risk of
21 comorbidities.

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

24 “(3) An assessment regarding dietary manage-
25 ment and weight management.

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

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

11 “(c) CONSULTATION.—

12 “(1) SPINAL CORD INJURY AND DISORDER PRO-
13 GRAM MANAGERS.—In maintaining, prescribing, or
14 amending any guidance, rules, or regulations issued
15 by the Department regarding the requirements set
16 out in this section, the Secretary shall consult with
17 the spinal cord injury and disorder program man-
18 agers of the Department, clinicians employed by the
19 Department as specialists in spinal cord injuries and
20 disorders, and the organizations named in or ap-
21 proved under section 5902 of this title.

22 “(2) MANUFACTURERS AND OTHER ENTI-
23 TIES.—In issuing any guidance, rules, or regulations
24 regarding the requirements set out in this section,
25 the Secretary may consult with manufacturers of as-

1 sistive technologies and other entities relevant to the
2 provision of assistive technologies if the guidance,
3 rules, or regulations would directly affect such man-
4 ufacturers or entities.

5 “(d) INFORMATION ON EVALUATION.—The Secretary
6 shall ensure, to the extent possible, that any veteran
7 known by the Secretary to have a spinal cord injury or
8 disorder receives information annually about the evalua-
9 tion available under this section and the benefits to the
10 veteran of choosing to undergo the evaluation.

11 “(e) USE OF EVALUATION IN PERFORMANCE RE-
12 VIEWS.—In reviewing the performance metrics of a Vet-
13 erans Integrated Service Network for any year beginning
14 after the date that is one year after the date of the enact-
15 ment of the Veterans Spinal Trauma Access to New De-
16 vices Act, the Secretary shall consider the provision of
17 evaluations under this section.

18 “(f) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date
19 of the enactment of the Veterans Spinal Trauma Access
20 to New Devices Act, and every two years thereafter, the
21 Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans’ Af-
22 fairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans’ Af-
23 fairs of the House of Representatives a report that in-
24 cludes the following:

25 “(1) For the period covered by the report—

1 “(A) the number of veterans who received
2 hospital care or medical services from the De-
3 partment and used an assistive technology;

4 “(B) the number of veterans who received
5 hospital care or medical services from the De-
6 partment and were assessed for the provision of
7 an assistive technology; and

8 “(C) the number of veterans who received
9 hospital care or medical services from the De-
10 partment and were prescribed an assistive tech-
11 nology.

12 “(2) For the two-year period immediately prior
13 to year the report is submitted, the year-to-year
14 change in the percentage of veterans with a spinal
15 cord injury or disorder who received an evaluation
16 under this section.

17 “(g) ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY DEFINED.—In this
18 section, the term ‘assistive technology’ means a powered
19 medical device or electronic tool used to treat or alleviate
20 symptoms or conditions caused by a spinal cord injury or
21 disorder, including the following:

22 “(1) A personal mobility device, including a
23 powered exoskeleton device.

24 “(2) A speech generating device.”.

1 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections
2 at the beginning of chapter 17 of such title is amended
3 by inserting after the item relating to section 1712C the
4 following new item:

“1713. Preventative health evaluations for veterans with a spinal cord injury or
disorder.”.

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