

113<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
2<sup>D</sup> SESSION

# H. R. 5059

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

DECEMBER 10, 2014

Received

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## AN ACT

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide for the conduct of annual evaluations of mental health care and suicide prevention programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs, to require a pilot program on loan repayment for psychiatrists who agree to serve in the Veterans Health Administration of 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.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Clay Hunt Suicide Pre-  
5 vention for American Veterans Act” or the “Clay Hunt  
6 SAV Act”.

7 **SEC. 2. EVALUATIONS OF MENTAL HEALTH CARE AND SUI-**  
8 **CIDE PREVENTION PROGRAMS OF DEPART-**  
9 **MENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

10 (a) EVALUATIONS.—

11 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not less frequently than  
12 once each year, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs  
13 shall provide for the conduct of an evaluation of the  
14 mental health care and suicide prevention programs  
15 carried out under the laws administered by the Sec-  
16 retary.

17 (2) ELEMENTS.—Each evaluation conducted  
18 under paragraph (1) shall—

19 (A) use metrics that are common among  
20 and useful for practitioners in the field of men-  
21 tal health care and suicide prevention;

22 (B) identify the most effective mental  
23 health care and suicide prevention programs  
24 conducted by the Secretary, including such pro-  
25 grams conducted at a Center of Excellence;

1 (C) identify the cost-effectiveness of each  
2 program identified under subparagraph (B);

3 (D) measure the satisfaction of patients  
4 with respect to the care provided under each  
5 such program; and

6 (E) propose best practices for caring for  
7 individuals who suffer from mental health dis-  
8 orders or are at risk of suicide, including such  
9 practices conducted or suggested by other de-  
10 partments or agencies of the Federal Govern-  
11 ment, including the Substance Abuse and Men-  
12 tal Health Services Administration of the De-  
13 partment of Health and Human Services.

14 (3) THIRD PARTY.—Each evaluation conducted  
15 under paragraph (1) shall be conducted by an inde-  
16 pendent third party unaffiliated with the Depart-  
17 ment of Veterans Affairs. Such third party shall  
18 submit to the Secretary each such evaluation.

19 (b) ANNUAL SUBMISSION.—Not later than December  
20 1 of each year, beginning in 2015, the Secretary shall sub-  
21 mit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate  
22 and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of  
23 Representatives a report that contains the following:

24 (1) The most recent evaluations submitted to  
25 the Secretary under subsection (a)(3) that the Sec-

1       retary has not previously submitted to such Commit-  
2       tees.

3               (2) Any recommendations the Secretary con-  
4       siders appropriate.

5 **SEC. 3. PUBLICATION OF INTERNET WEBSITE TO PROVIDE**  
6                       **INFORMATION REGARDING MENTAL HEALTH**  
7                       **CARE SERVICES.**

8       (a) IN GENERAL.—Using funds made available to the  
9       Secretary of Veterans Affairs to publish the Internet  
10       websites of the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Sec-  
11       retary shall survey the existing Internet websites and in-  
12       formation resources of the Department to publish an  
13       Internet website that serves as a centralized source to pro-  
14       vide veterans with information regarding all of the mental  
15       health care services provided by the Secretary.

16       (b) ELEMENTS.—The Internet website published  
17       under subsection (a) shall provide to veterans information  
18       regarding all of the mental health care services available  
19       in the Veteran Integrated Service Network that the vet-  
20       eran is seeking such services, including, with respect to  
21       each medical center, Vet Center (as defined in section  
22       1712A of title 38, United States Code), and community-  
23       based outpatient center in the Veterans Integrated Service  
24       Network—

1 (1) the name and contact information of each  
2 social work office;

3 (2) the name and contact information of each  
4 mental health clinic;

5 (3) a list of appropriate staff; and

6 (4) any other information the Secretary deter-  
7 mines appropriate.

8 (c) UPDATED INFORMATION.—The Secretary shall  
9 ensure that the information described in subsection (b)  
10 that is published on the Internet website under subsection  
11 (a) is updated not less than once every 90 days.

12 (d) OUTREACH.—In carrying out this section, the  
13 Secretary shall ensure that the outreach conducted under  
14 section 1720F(i) of title 38, United States Code, includes  
15 information regarding the Internet website published  
16 under subsection (a).

17 **SEC. 4. PILOT PROGRAM FOR REPAYMENT OF EDU-**  
18 **CATIONAL LOANS FOR CERTAIN PSYCHIA-**  
19 **TRISTS OF VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRA-**  
20 **TION.**

21 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of Veterans  
22 Affairs shall carry out a pilot program to repay loans of  
23 individuals described in subsection (b) that—

1           (1) were used by such individuals to finance  
2 education relating to psychiatric medicine, including  
3 education leading to—

4                   (A) a degree of doctor of medicine; or

5                   (B) a degree of doctor of osteopathy; and

6           (2) were obtained from any of the following:

7                   (A) A governmental entity.

8                   (B) A private financial institution.

9                   (C) A school.

10                  (D) Any other authorized entity as deter-  
11 mined by the Secretary.

12           (b) ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS.—

13                   (1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2), an  
14 individual eligible for participation in the pilot pro-  
15 gram is an individual who—

16                   (A) either—

17                           (i) is licensed or eligible for licensure  
18 to practice psychiatric medicine in the Vet-  
19 erans Health Administration of the De-  
20 partment of Veterans Affairs; or

21                           (ii) is enrolled in the final year of a  
22 residency program leading to a specialty  
23 qualification in psychiatric medicine that is  
24 approved by the Accreditation Council for  
25 Graduate Medical Education; and

1           (B) demonstrates a commitment to a long-  
2           term career as a psychiatrist in the Veterans  
3           Health Administration, as determined by the  
4           Secretary.

5           (2) PROHIBITION ON SIMULTANEOUS ELIGI-  
6           BILITY.—An individual who is participating in any  
7           other program of the Federal Government that re-  
8           pays the educational loans of the individual is not el-  
9           igible to participate in the pilot program.

10          (c) SELECTION.—The Secretary shall select not less  
11          than 10 individuals described in subsection (b) to partici-  
12          pate in the pilot program for each year in which the Sec-  
13          retary carries out the pilot program.

14          (d) PERIOD OF OBLIGATED SERVICE.—The Sec-  
15          retary shall enter into an agreement with each individual  
16          selected under subsection (c) in which such individual  
17          agrees to serve a period of 2 or more years of obligated  
18          service for the Veterans Health Administration in the field  
19          of psychiatric medicine, as determined by the Secretary.

20          (e) LOAN REPAYMENTS.—

21                 (1) AMOUNTS.—Subject to paragraph (2), a  
22                 loan repayment under this section may consist of  
23                 payment of the principal, interest, and related ex-  
24                 penses of a loan obtained by an individual who is  
25                 participating in the pilot program for all educational

1 expenses (including tuition, fees, books, and labora-  
2 tory expenses) of such individual relating to edu-  
3 cation described in subsection (a)(1).

4 (2) LIMIT.—For each year of obligated service  
5 that an individual who is participating in the pilot  
6 program agrees to serve under subsection (d), the  
7 Secretary may pay not more than \$30,000 in loan  
8 repayment on behalf of such individual.

9 (f) BREACH.—

10 (1) LIABILITY.—An individual who participates  
11 in the pilot program and fails to satisfy the period  
12 of obligated service under subsection (d) shall be lia-  
13 ble to the United States, in lieu of such obligated  
14 service, for the amount that has been paid or is pay-  
15 able to or on behalf of the individual under the pilot  
16 program, reduced by the proportion that the number  
17 of days served for completion of the period of obli-  
18 gated service bears to the total number of days in  
19 the period of obligated service of such individual.

20 (2) REPAYMENT PERIOD.—Any amount of dam-  
21 ages that the United States is entitled to recover  
22 under this subsection shall be paid to the United  
23 States not later than 1 year after the date of the  
24 breach of the agreement.

25 (g) REPORT.—



1           (1) INITIAL REPORT.—Not later than 2 years  
2 after the date on which the pilot program under sub-  
3 section (a) commences, the Secretary shall submit to  
4 the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate  
5 and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the  
6 House of Representatives a report on the pilot pro-  
7 gram.

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

10           (A) The number of individuals who partici-  
11 pated in the pilot program, including the num-  
12 ber of new hires.

13           (B) The locations in which such individuals  
14 were employed by the Department, including  
15 how many such locations were rural or urban  
16 locations.

17           (C) An assessment of the quality of the  
18 work performed by such individuals in the  
19 course of such employment, including the per-  
20 formance reviews of such individuals.

21           (D) The number of psychiatrists the Sec-  
22 retary determines is needed by the Department  
23 in the future.

24           (3) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than 90 days  
25 before the date on which the pilot program termi-

1 nates under subsection (i), the Secretary shall sub-  
2 mit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the  
3 Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of  
4 the House of Representatives an update to the re-  
5 port submitted under paragraph (1) and any rec-  
6 ommendations that the Secretary considers appro-  
7 priate.

8 (h) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary shall prescribe  
9 regulations to carry out this section, including standards  
10 for qualified loans and authorized payees and other terms  
11 and conditions for the making of loan repayments.

12 (i) TERMINATION.—The authority to carry out the  
13 pilot program shall expire on the date that is 3 years after  
14 the date on which the Secretary commences the pilot pro-  
15 gram.

16 **SEC. 5. PILOT PROGRAM ON COMMUNITY OUTREACH.**

17 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs  
18 shall establish a pilot program to assist veterans  
19 transitioning from serving on active duty and to improve  
20 the access of veterans to mental health services.

21 (b) LOCATIONS.—The Secretary shall carry out the  
22 pilot program under subsection (a) at not less than five  
23 Veterans Integrated Service Networks that have a large  
24 population of veterans who—

1           (1) served in the reserve components of the  
2       Armed Forces; or

3           (2) are transitioning into communities with an  
4       established population of veterans after having re-  
5       cently separated from the Armed Forces.

6       (c) FUNCTIONS.—The pilot program at each Vet-  
7       erans Integrated Service Network described in subsection  
8       (b) shall include the following:

9           (1) A community oriented veteran peer support  
10       network, carried out in partnership with an appro-  
11       priate entity with experience in peer support pro-  
12       grams, that—

13           (A) establishes peer support training  
14       guidelines;

15           (B) develops a network of veteran peer  
16       support counselors to meet the demands of the  
17       communities in the Veterans Integrated Service  
18       Network;

19           (C) conducts training of veteran peer sup-  
20       port counselors;

21           (D) with respect to one medical center se-  
22       lected by the Secretary in each such Veterans  
23       Integrated Service Network, has—

1 (i) a designated peer support spe-  
2 cialist who acts as a liaison to the commu-  
3 nity oriented veteran peer network; and

4 (ii) a certified mental health profes-  
5 sional designated as the community ori-  
6 ented veteran peer network mentor; and

7 (E) is readily available to veterans, includ-  
8 ing pursuant to the Veterans Integrated Service  
9 Network cooperating and working with State  
10 and local governments and appropriate entities.

11 (2) A community outreach team for each med-  
12 ical center selected by the Secretary pursuant to  
13 paragraph (1)(D) that—

14 (A) assists veterans transitioning into com-  
15 munities;

16 (B) establishes a veteran transition advi-  
17 sory group to facilitate outreach activities;

18 (C) includes the participation of appro-  
19 priate community organizations, State and local  
20 governments, colleges and universities, cham-  
21 bers of commerce and other local business orga-  
22 nizations, and organizations that provide legal  
23 aid or advice; and

24 (D) coordinates with the Veterans Inte-  
25 grated Service Network regarding the Veterans

1 Integrated Service Network carrying out an an-  
2 nual mental health summit to assess the status  
3 of veteran mental health care in the community  
4 and to develop new or innovative means to pro-  
5 vide mental health services to veterans.

6 (d) REPORTS.—

7 (1) INITIAL REPORT.—Not later than 18  
8 months after the date on which the pilot program  
9 under subsection (a) commences, the Secretary shall  
10 submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the  
11 Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of  
12 the House of Representatives a report on the pilot  
13 program. With respect to each Veterans Integrated  
14 Service Network described in subsection (b), the re-  
15 port shall include—

16 (A) a full description of the peer support  
17 model implemented under the pilot program,  
18 participation data, and data pertaining to past  
19 and current mental health related hospitaliza-  
20 tions and fatalities;

21 (B) recommendations on implementing  
22 peer support networks throughout the Depart-  
23 ment;

24 (C) whether the mental health resources  
25 made available under the pilot program for

1 members of the reserve components of the  
2 Armed Forces is effective; and

3 (D) a full description of the activities and  
4 effectiveness of community outreach coordi-  
5 nating teams under the pilot program, including  
6 partnerships that have been established with  
7 appropriate entities.

8 (2) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than 90 days  
9 before the date on which the pilot program termi-  
10 nates under subsection (e), the Secretary shall sub-  
11 mit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the  
12 Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of  
13 the House of Representatives an update to the re-  
14 port submitted under paragraph (1).

15 (e) CONSTRUCTION.—This section may not be con-  
16 strued to authorize the Secretary to hire additional em-  
17 ployees of the Department to carry out the pilot program  
18 under subsection (a).

19 (f) TERMINATION.—The authority of the Secretary to  
20 carry out the pilot program under subsection (a) shall ter-  
21minate on the date that is 3 years after the date on which  
22 the pilot program commences.

1 **SEC. 6. COLLABORATION ON SUICIDE PREVENTION EF-**  
2 **FORTS BETWEEN DEPARTMENT OF VET-**  
3 **ERANS AFFAIRS AND NON-PROFIT MENTAL**  
4 **HEALTH ORGANIZATIONS.**

5 (a) **COLLABORATION.**—The Secretary of Veterans Af-  
6 fairs may collaborate with non-profit mental health orga-  
7 nizations to prevent suicide among veterans as follows:

8 (1) To improve the efficiency and effectiveness  
9 of suicide prevention efforts carried out by the Sec-  
10 retary and non-profit mental health organizations.

11 (2) To assist non-profit mental health organiza-  
12 tions with the suicide prevention efforts of such or-  
13 ganizations through the use of the expertise of em-  
14 ployees of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

15 (3) To jointly carry out suicide prevention ef-  
16 forts.

17 (b) **EXCHANGE OF RESOURCES.**—In carrying out any  
18 collaboration under subsection (a), the Secretary and any  
19 non-profit mental health organization with which the Sec-  
20 retary is collaborating under such subsection shall ex-  
21 change training sessions and best practices to help with  
22 the suicide prevention efforts of the Department and such  
23 organization.

24 (c) **DIRECTOR OF SUICIDE PREVENTION COORDINA-**  
25 **TION.**—The Secretary shall select within the Department  
26 a Director of Suicide Prevention Coordination to under-

1 take any collaboration with non-profit mental health orga-  
2 nizations under this section or any other provision of law.

3 **SEC. 7. ADDITIONAL PERIOD OF ELIGIBILITY FOR HEALTH**  
4 **CARE FOR CERTAIN VETERANS OF COMBAT**  
5 **SERVICE DURING CERTAIN PERIODS OF HOS-**  
6 **TILITIES AND WAR.**

7 Paragraph (3) of section 1710(e) of title 38, United  
8 States Code, is amended to read as follows:

9 “(3) In the case of care for a veteran described in  
10 paragraph (1)(D), hospital care, medical services, and  
11 nursing home care may be provided under or by virtue  
12 of subsection (a)(2)(F) only during the following periods:

13 “(A) Except as provided by subparagraph (B),  
14 with respect to a veteran described in paragraph  
15 (1)(D) who is discharged or released from the active  
16 military, naval, or air service after January 27,  
17 2003, the five-year period beginning on the date of  
18 such discharge or release.

19 “(B) With respect to a veteran described in  
20 paragraph (1)(D) who is discharged or released from  
21 the active military, naval, or air service after Janu-  
22 ary 1, 2009, and before January 1, 2011, but did  
23 not enroll to receive such hospital care, medical serv-  
24 ices, or nursing home care pursuant to such para-  
25 graph during the five-year period described in sub-



1 paragraph (A), the one-year period beginning on  
2 January 1, 2015.

3 “(C) With respect to a veteran described in  
4 paragraph (1)(D) who is discharged or released from  
5 the active military, naval, or air service on or before  
6 January 27, 2003, and did not enroll in the patient  
7 enrollment system under section 1705 of this title on  
8 or before such date, the three-year period beginning  
9 on January 27, 2008.”.

10 **SEC. 8. PROHIBITION ON NEW APPROPRIATIONS.**

11 No additional funds are authorized to be appro-  
12 priated to carry out this Act and the amendments made  
13 by this Act, and this Act and such amendments shall be  
14 carried out using amounts otherwise made available for  
15 such purposes.

Passed the House of Representatives December 9,  
2014.

Attest:

KAREN L. HAAS,

*Clerk.*