

AMENDMENT TO RULES COMMITTEE PRINT 118-

35

OFFERED BY MR. BIGGS OF ARIZONA

At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

1 SEC. 423. (a) PILOT PROGRAM ON ABILITY OF VET-
2 ERANS TO CHOOSE HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS.—The
3 Secretary of Veterans Affairs, acting through the Center
4 for Innovation for Care and Payment, shall carry out a
5 pilot program to improve the ability of eligible veterans
6 to access hospital care, medical services, and extended care
7 services through the covered care system by providing the
8 eligible veterans the ability to choose health care providers.

9 (b) LOCATIONS.—The Secretary shall select a min-
10 imum of four Veterans Integrated Service Networks in
11 which to carry out the pilot program under this section.
12 In making such selection, the Secretary shall ensure that
13 the pilot program is carried out in varied geographic areas
14 that include both rural and urban locations.

15 (c) REMOVAL OF CERTAIN REQUIREMENTS TO AC-
16 CESS CARE.—In carrying out the pilot program under
17 subsection (a), the Secretary shall furnish hospital care,

1 medical services, and extended care services to eligible vet-
2 erans through the covered care system as follows:

3 (1) At medical facilities of the Department of
4 Veterans Affairs, regardless of whether the facility is
5 in the same Veterans Integrated Service Network as
6 the Network in which the veteran resides.

7 (2) At non-Department facilities pursuant to,
8 as appropriate—

9 (A) section 1703 of title 38, United States
10 Code, without regard to the requirements speci-
11 fied in subsection (d) of such section; or

12 (B) section 1703A of such title, without re-
13 gard to the requirements specified in subsection
14 (a)(1)(C) of such section.

15 (d) ELECTION OF VETERAN.—In accordance with
16 subsections (d) and (e), an eligible veteran participating
17 in the pilot program may elect to receive hospital care,
18 medical services, and extended care services at any pro-
19 vider in the covered care system.

20 (e) COORDINATION OF CARE.—

21 (1) SELECTION.—Each eligible veteran partici-
22 pating in the pilot program shall select a primary
23 care provider in the covered care system. The pri-
24 mary care provider shall—

1 (A) coordinate with the Secretary and
2 other health care providers the hospital care,
3 medical services, and extended care services fur-
4 nished to the veteran under the pilot program;
5 and

6 (B) refer the veteran to specialty care pro-
7 viders in the covered care system, as clinically
8 necessary.

9 (2) SYSTEMS.—The Secretary shall establish
10 systems as the Secretary determines appropriate to
11 ensure that a primary care provider can effectively
12 coordinate the hospital care, medical services, and
13 extended care services furnished to a veteran under
14 the pilot program.

15 (f) SPECIALTY CARE.—

16 (1) ACCESS.—Subject to subsection (d)(1)(B),
17 an eligible veteran participating in the pilot program
18 may select any specialty care provider in the covered
19 care system from which to receive specialty care.

20 (2) DESIGNATION.—The Secretary may des-
21 ignate a specialty care provider as a primary care
22 provider of an eligible veteran participating in the
23 pilot program if the Secretary determines that such
24 designation is in the health interests of the veteran
25 (such as an endocrinologist with respect to a veteran

1 diagnosed with diabetes, a neurologist with respect
2 to a veteran diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, or
3 an obstetrician-gynecologist with respect to a female
4 veteran).

5 (g) MENTAL HEALTH CARE.—An eligible veteran
6 participating in the pilot program may select a mental
7 health care provider in the covered care system from which
8 to receive mental health care.

9 (h) INFORMATION.—In carrying out the pilot pro-
10 gram, the Secretary shall furnish to eligible veterans the
11 information on eligibility, cost sharing, treatments, and
12 providers required for veterans to make informed decisions
13 with respect to—

14 (1) selecting primary care providers and spe-
15 cialty care providers; and

16 (2) treatments available to the veteran.

17 (i) DURATION.—

18 (1) PHASE IN.—The Secretary shall carry out
19 the pilot program during the three-year period be-
20 ginning on the date that is one year after the date
21 of the enactment of this Act.

22 (2) PERMANENT REQUIREMENT.—

23 (A) VETERANS COMMUNITY CARE PRO-
24 GRAM.—Section 1703(d) of title 38, United
25 States Code, is amended—

1 (i) in paragraph (1), by striking “The
2 Secretary shall” and inserting “Except as
3 provided by paragraph (4), the Secretary
4 shall”; and

5 (ii) by adding at the end the following
6 new paragraph:

7 “(4) Beginning on the date that is four years after
8 the date of the enactment of the Veterans Health Care
9 Freedom Act—

10 “(A) the requirements under paragraphs (1),
11 (2), and (3) shall not apply with respect to fur-
12 nishing hospital care, medical services, and extended
13 care services to a covered veteran under this section;
14 and

15 “(B) the Secretary shall furnish hospital care,
16 medical services, and extended care services to a cov-
17 ered veteran under this section with the same condi-
18 tions on the ability of the veteran to choose health
19 care providers as specified in the pilot program de-
20 scribed in section 2 of such Act.”.

21 (B) VETERANS CARE AGREEMENTS.—Sec-
22 tion 1703A(a)(1) of such title is amended—

23 (i) in subparagraph (C), by striking
24 “For purposes” and inserting “Except as

1 provided by subparagraph (E), for pur-
2 poses”; and

3 (ii) by adding at the end the following
4 new subparagraph:

5 “(E) Beginning on the date that is four years after
6 the date of the enactment of the Veterans Health Care
7 Freedom Act—

8 “(i) the requirements under subparagraph (C)
9 shall not apply with respect to furnishing hospital
10 care, medical services, and extended care services to
11 a covered veteran under this section; and

12 “(ii) the Secretary shall furnish hospital care,
13 medical services, and extended care services to a cov-
14 ered veteran under this section with the same condi-
15 tions on the ability of the veteran to choose health
16 care providers as specified in the pilot program de-
17 scribed in section 2 of such Act.”.

18 (C) VISNs.—Beginning on the date that is
19 four years after the date of the enactment of
20 this Act, the Secretary shall furnish hospital
21 care, medical services, and extended care serv-
22 ices to veterans under chapter 17 of title 38,
23 United States Code, at medical facilities of the
24 Department of Veterans Affairs, regardless of
25 whether the facility is in the same Veterans In-

1 tegrated Service Network as the Network in
2 which the veteran resides.

3 (j) REPORTS.—

4 (1) IMPLEMENTATION.—On a quarterly basis
5 during the two-year period beginning on the date of
6 the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit
7 to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House
8 of Representatives and the Senate a report on the
9 implementation of the pilot program. One such re-
10 port shall contain a description of the final design
11 of the pilot program.

12 (2) ANNUAL.—On an annual basis during the
13 period beginning on the date that is one year after
14 the date of the submission of the final report under
15 paragraph (1) and ending on the date of the conclu-
16 sion of the pilot program, the Secretary shall submit
17 to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House
18 of Representatives and the Senate a report on the
19 results of the pilot program.

20 (k) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary, in consultation
21 with the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House
22 of Representatives and the Senate, may prescribe regula-
23 tions to carry out this section.

24 (l) NO ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS.—No addi-
25 tional funds are authorized to be appropriated to carry

1 out this section, and this section shall be carried out using
2 amounts otherwise made available to the Veterans Health
3 Administration.

4 (m) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

5 (1) The term “covered care system” means
6 each—

7 (A) medical facility of the Department;

8 (B) health care provider specified in sub-
9 section 1703(c) of title 38, United States Code;
10 and

11 (C) eligible entity or provider that has en-
12 tered into a Veterans Care Agreement under
13 section 1703A of such title.

14 (2) The term “eligible veteran” means a vet-
15 eran who is enrolled in the patient enrollment sys-
16 tem of the Department of Veterans Affairs under
17 section 1705 of title 38, United States Code.

18 (3) The term “non-Department facility” has
19 the meaning given that term in section 1701 of title
20 38, United States Code.

