AMENDMENT TO RULES COMMITTEE PRINT

118–10

OFFERED BY MR. NEGUSE OF COLORADO

Add at the end of subtitle C of title VII the following:

SEC. 7. STUDY ON ACCESSIBILITY OF OFF-BASE MENTAL HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS.

(a) STUDY AND REPORT.—

(1) Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs shall seek to conduct a comprehensive study and report on the accessibility of off-base mental health care providers and how those services work to reduce the stigma of receiving care, and provide recommendations for their implementation.

(2) In this section, the term “off-base mental health care providers” refers to non-military treatment facilities and mental health professionals operating outside of military installations.

(b) STUDY.—The study shall include, but not be limited to, the following:
1. **Geographic Availability.**—Evaluate the distribution of off-base mental health care providers relative to military installations and identify any gaps in accessibility.

2. **Appointment Wait Times.**—Assess the average wait times for appointments with off-base mental health care providers and identify any factors contributing to delays.

3. **Cost Considerations.**—Examine the affordability and insurance coverage options for off-base mental health care services.

4. **Outreach and Education.**—Evaluate the effectiveness of outreach programs aimed at reducing the stigma of seeking mental health care and increasing awareness of off-base resources.

5. **Collaboration and Coordination.**—Assess the extent of collaboration and coordination between military treatment facilities and off-base mental health care providers.

6. **Best Practices.**—Identify successful strategies employed by off-base mental health care providers to improve accessibility and reduce stigma.

This will include:
(A) An assessment of existing off-base mental health care providers within the Department of Defense and their effectiveness.

(B) An evaluation of the potential benefits, challenges, and limitations associated with expanding off-base mental health care providers for active service members.

(C) An analysis of the potential impact on military readiness, retention, and overall force resilience resulting from increased utilization off-base mental health support services.

(c) STUDY REQUIREMENTS.—The Assistant Secretary shall initiate a study, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, to assess the accessibility of off-base mental health care providers for military personnel and their dependents.

(1) PARTICIPANTS.—The participants in the roundtable shall include the following:

(A) The Under Secretary for Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness.

(B) The Assistant Secretary for Defense Health.

(C) The Director of the Defense Human Resources Activity.
(D) Other officials of the Department of Defense or the Secretary of Defense determines appropriate.

(E) Private entities that elect to participate.

(2) NOTICE.—The Assistant Secretary shall publish notice of the roundtable in multiple private sector forums and the Federal Register to encourage participation in the roundtable by private entities and entities interested in supporting the improvement of the accessibility of off-base mental health care providers for military personnel and their dependents.

(d) REPORT.—

(1) Not later than one year after the initiation of the study, the Assistant Secretary of Defense shall submit a report to the Committee on Armed Services of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate detailing the findings, conclusions, and recommendations resulting from the study and report.

(2) The report shall include a comprehensive plan of action, including proposed timelines, milestones, and resource requirements, for the actionable recommendations for improving the accessibility of
off-base mental health care providers and reducing
the stigma associated with seeking care.

(3) The recommendations shall consider legisla-
tive, regulatory, and programmatic changes that
may be necessary to implement the proposed im-
provements.