

113TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

S. _____

To improve wait times for appointments for hospital care, medical services, and other health care from the Department of Veterans Affairs, to improve accountability of employees responsible for long wait times for such appointments, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mrs. SHAHEEN introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To improve wait times for appointments for hospital care, medical services, and other health care from the Department of Veterans Affairs, to improve accountability of employees responsible for long wait times for such appointments, 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 Access to
5 Care Accountability Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. AUDITS BY THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE**
2 **UNITED STATES.**

3 The Comptroller General of the United States shall
4 conduct random, periodic audits of medical facilities of the
5 Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Veterans Inte-
6 grated Service Networks, to assess whether such facilities
7 and Networks are complying with all standards imposed
8 by law or by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs with respect
9 to the timely access of veterans to hospital care, medical
10 services, and other health care from the Department.

11 **SEC. 3. IMPROVEMENT OF WAIT TIMES FOR APPOINT-**
12 **MENTS FOR HOSPITAL CARE, MEDICAL SERV-**
13 **ICES, AND OTHER HEALTH CARE FROM THE**
14 **DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

15 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs
16 shall, upon receipt of a report described in subsection (b)
17 that finds that an eligible veteran has been subjected to
18 a wait time of more than 30 days for an appointment for
19 hospital care, medical services, or other health care from
20 the Department of Veterans Affairs—

21 (1) not later than 48 hours after the receipt of
22 such report, notify such eligible veteran of the status
23 of the appointment of such eligible veteran for such
24 care or services; and

25 (2) make every effort possible to schedule an
26 appointment for such eligible veteran for such care

1 or services at a medical facility of the Department
2 or through a non-Department health care provider
3 on a date that is not later than seven days after the
4 receipt of such report.

5 (b) REPORT DESCRIBED.—A report described in this
6 subsection is any report as follows:

7 (1) Any report of the Inspector General of the
8 Department of Veterans Affairs with respect to the
9 provision by the Department of hospital care, med-
10 ical services, or other health care to veterans.

11 (2) Any report of the Comptroller General of
12 the United States with respect to the provision by
13 the Department of such care or services.

14 (3) Any report of the Department or another
15 organization with respect to the provision by the De-
16 partment of such care or services within a Veterans
17 Integrated Service Network or medical facility of the
18 Department.

19 (4) Any other report of the Department with
20 respect to the provision by the Department of such
21 care or services.

22 (c) PRIVACY.—Nothing in this section shall be con-
23 strued to alter privacy rules of the Department with re-
24 spect to the disclosure of personal information of eligible

1 veterans seeking such care or services from the Depart-
2 ment.

3 (d) ELIGIBLE VETERAN DEFINED.—In this section,
4 the term “eligible veteran” means a veteran who is eligible
5 for hospital care, medical services, or other health care
6 under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans
7 Affairs.

8 **SEC. 4. EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION AND BONUSES AC-**
9 **COUNTABILITY AT DEPARTMENT OF VET-**
10 **ERANS AFFAIRS.**

11 (a) INSPECTOR GENERAL OF DEPARTMENT OF VET-
12 ERANS AFFAIRS NOTICE.—If the Inspector General of the
13 Department of Veterans Affairs determines that the direc-
14 tor of a medical facility of the Department of Veterans
15 Affairs or other official of the Department responsible for
16 activities at such facility has purposefully misrepresented
17 patient records or other data to conceal a failure of the
18 facility to comply with patient access or care standards
19 of the Department or for the purpose of qualifying for a
20 performance award under section 5384 of title 5, United
21 States Code, or any other compensation that is in addition
22 to basic pay—

23 (1) not later than 30 days after the date on
24 which the Inspector General makes such determina-
25 tion, the Inspector General shall submit to the Com-

1 mittee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the
2 Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of
3 Representatives notice of such determination; and

4 (2) not later than 15 days after the date on
5 which the Inspector General submits notice under
6 paragraph (1), the Inspector General shall submit to
7 the Secretary a list of the names of each director or
8 other official responsible for such misrepresentation.

9 (b) LIMITATION ON PERFORMANCE AWARDS.—Not-
10 withstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary
11 may not pay a bonus or award, including a performance
12 award under section 5384 of title 5, United States Code,
13 to any director or other official of the Department in-
14 cluded in a list submitted under subsection (a)(2) until
15 the Secretary determines that all issues relating to the
16 reasons why such director or other individual was included
17 in such list have been resolved.

18 (c) PERFORMANCE REVIEWS.—The Secretary shall
19 ensure that any performance review or consideration for
20 promotion of a director or other official of the Department
21 responsible for activities at a medical facility of the De-
22 partment with respect to which a notice was submitted
23 under subsection (a)(1) for a misrepresentation includes
24 an evaluation of whether the director or other official knew
25 or should have known about such misrepresentation.

1 (d) PROHIBITION ON PUBLICATION OF NAMES.—The
2 Inspector General may not make public the names of di-
3 rectors or other officials included in the list under sub-
4 section (a)(2).

5 (e) ROLE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL.—Any responsi-
6 bility or authority of the Inspector General provided under
7 this section is in addition to any responsibility or authority
8 provided to the Inspector General in the Inspector General
9 Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App).