

108TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2357

To amend title 38, United States Code, to establish standards of access to care for veterans seeking health care from the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 5, 2003

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida (for herself, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, and Mr. MILLER of Florida) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to establish standards of access to care for veterans seeking health care from 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. ACCESS TO CARE STANDARDS.**

4 (a) **REQUIRED STANDARDS FOR ACCESS TO CARE.**—
5 Section 1703 of title 38, United States Code, is amended
6 by adding at the end the following new subsection:

7 “(d)(1) The following are the standards for access to
8 care for the Department:

1 “(A) For a veteran seeking primary care, the
2 standard for access is 30 days, determined from the
3 date on which the veteran contacts the Department
4 seeking an appointment until the date on which a
5 visit with a primary care provider is completed.

6 “(B) For a veteran seeking specialized care, the
7 standard for access is 30 days, determined from the
8 date on which the veteran is referred for specialty
9 care by a primary care provider until the date on
10 which a visit with an appropriate specialty primary
11 care provider is completed.

12 “(2) The Secretary shall develop and disseminate an
13 appropriate standard of waiting time, determined from the
14 time at which the veteran’s visit is scheduled until the vet-
15 eran is seen by the provider. The Secretary shall periodi-
16 cally review performance of Department facilities com-
17 pared to that standard. The Secretary shall annually re-
18 port to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate
19 and House of Representatives an assessment of the De-
20 partment’s performance against that standard.

21 “(3) In a case in which the Secretary is unable to
22 meet the standard for access to care, the Secretary shall
23 use the authority of subsection (a) to furnish health care
24 and services for that veteran in a non-Department facil-
25 ity.”.

1 (b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by
2 subsection (a) shall take effect on the first day of the first
3 month beginning more than six months after the date of
4 the enactment of this Act.

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