

lowing Veterans Integrated Service Networks (and such other locations as the Secretary considers appropriate):

- “(A) Veterans Integrated Service Network 1.
- “(B) Veterans Integrated Service Network 6.
- “(C) Veterans Integrated Service Network 15.
- “(D) Veterans Integrated Service Network 18.
- “(E) Veterans Integrated Service Network 19.

“(b) COVERED VETERANS.—For purposes of the pilot program under this section, a covered veteran is any veteran who—

“(1) is—

“(A) enrolled in the system of patient enrollment established under section 1705(a) of title 38, United States Code, as of August 1, 2014; or

“(B) eligible for health care under section 1710(e)(3) of such title; and

“(2) resides in a location that is—

“(A) more than 60 minutes driving distance from the nearest Department health care facility providing primary care services, if the veteran is seeking such services;

“(B) more than 120 minutes driving distance from the nearest Department health care facility providing acute hospital care, if the veteran is seeking such care; or

“(C) more than 240 minutes driving distance from the nearest Department health care facility providing tertiary care, if the veteran is seeking such care.

“(c) COVERED HEALTH SERVICES.—For purposes of the pilot program under this section, a covered health service with respect to a covered veteran is any hospital care, medical service, rehabilitative service, or preventative health service that is authorized to be provided by the Secretary to the veteran under chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, or any other provision of law.

“(d) QUALIFYING NON-DEPARTMENT HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS.—For purposes of the pilot program under this section, an entity or individual is a qualifying non-Department health care provider of a covered health service if the Secretary determines that the entity or individual is qualified to furnish such service to veterans under the pilot program.

“(e) ELECTION.—A covered veteran seeking to be provided covered health services under the pilot program under this section shall submit to the Secretary an application therefor in such form, and containing such information as the Secretary shall specify for purposes of the pilot program.

“(f) PROVISION OF SERVICES THROUGH CONTRACT.—The Secretary shall provide covered health services to veterans under the pilot program under this section through contracts with qualifying non-Department health care providers for the provision of such services.

“(g) EXCHANGE OF MEDICAL INFORMATION.—In conducting the pilot program under this section, the Secretary shall develop and utilize a functional capability to provide for the exchange of appropriate medical information between the Department and non-Department health care providers providing health services under the pilot program.

“(h) APPOINTMENTS.—In carrying out the pilot program under this section, the Secretary shall ensure that medical appointments for covered veterans—

“(1) are scheduled not later than 5 days after the date on which the appointment is requested; and

“(2) occur not later than 30 days after such date.

“(i) OUTREACH.—The Secretary shall ensure that covered veterans are informed about the pilot program under this section.

“(j) USE OF EXISTING CONTRACTS.—Notwithstanding any provision of law relating to the use of competitive procedures in entering into contracts, in carrying out the pilot program under this section after the date of the enactment of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 [Aug. 7, 2014], the Secretary shall make use of contracts entered into under this section before such date or may enter into new contracts.

“(k) REPORTS.—Not later than the 30 days after the end of each year in which the pilot program under this section is conducted, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee of Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report which includes—

“(1) the assessment of the Secretary of the pilot program during the preceding year, including its cost, volume, quality, patient satisfaction, benefit to veterans, and such other findings and conclusions with respect to pilot program as the Secretary considers appropriate; and

“(2) such recommendations as the Secretary considers appropriate regarding—

“(A) the continuation of the pilot program;

“(B) extension of the pilot program to other or all Veterans Integrated Service Networks of the Department; and

“(C) making the pilot program permanent.”

RATIFICATION OF MEDICAL SERVICES CONTRACTS

Section 1503(c) of Pub. L. 100-687 ratified actions of the Administrator in contracting with facilities other than Veterans' Administration facilities for furnishing medical services incident to treatment of certain veterans receiving hospital, nursing home, or domiciliary care, who applied for such services during the period beginning July 1, 1988, and ending Nov. 18, 1988.

PUERTO RICO CONTRACT CARE; LIMITATION ON INCURRING OF OBLIGATIONS

Pub. L. 99-166, title I, §102(b)(2)-(5), Dec. 3, 1985, 99 Stat. 943, as amended by Pub. L. 99-272, title XIX, §19012(c)(5)(B), Apr. 7, 1986, 100 Stat. 382, limited Administrator's authority to incur obligations for medical services for veterans residing in Puerto Rico during fiscal years 1986 to 1988.

§ 1704. Preventive health services: annual report

Not later than October 31 each year, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a report on preventive health services. Each such report shall include the following:

(1) A description of the programs and activities of the Department with respect to preventive health services during the preceding fiscal year, including a description of the following:

(A) The programs conducted by the Department—

(i) to educate veterans with respect to health promotion and disease prevention; and

(ii) to provide veterans with preventive health screenings and other clinical services, with such description setting forth the types of resources used by the Department to conduct such screenings and services and the number of veterans reached by such screenings and services.

(B) The means by which the Secretary addressed the specific preventive health services needs of particular groups of veterans (including veterans with service-connected disabilities, elderly veterans, low-income veterans, women veterans, institutionalized veterans, and veterans who are at risk for mental illness).

(C) The manner in which the provision of such services was coordinated with the activities of the Medical and Prosthetic Research Service of the Department and the National Center for Preventive Health.

(D) The manner in which the provision of such services was integrated into training programs of the Department, including initial and continuing medical training of medical students, residents, and Department staff.

(E) The manner in which the Department participated in cooperative preventive health efforts with other governmental and private entities (including State and local health promotion offices and not-for-profit organizations).

(F) The specific research carried out by the Department with respect to the long-term relationships among screening activities, treatment, and morbidity and mortality outcomes.

(G) The cost effectiveness of such programs and activities, including an explanation of the means by which the costs and benefits (including the quality of life of veterans who participate in such programs and activities) of such programs and activities are measured.

(2) A specific description of research activities on preventive health services carried out during that period using employees, funds, equipment, office space, or other support services of the Department, with such description setting forth—

(A) the source of funds for those activities;

(B) the articles or publications (including the authors of the articles and publications) in which those activities are described;

(C) the Federal, State, or local governmental entity or private entity, if any, with which such activities were carried out; and

(D) the clinical, research, or staff education projects for which funding applications were submitted (including the source of the funds applied for) and upon which a decision is pending or was denied.

(3) An accounting of the expenditure of funds during that period by the National Center for Preventive Health under section 7318 of this title.

(Added Pub. L. 102-585, title V, §512(a), Nov. 4, 1992, 106 Stat. 4957.)

§ 1705. Management of health care: patient enrollment system

(a) In managing the provision of hospital care and medical services under section 1710(a) of this title, the Secretary, in accordance with regulations the Secretary shall prescribe, shall establish and operate a system of annual patient enrollment. The Secretary shall manage the enrollment of veterans in accordance with the following priorities, in the order listed:

(1) Veterans with service-connected disabilities rated 50 percent or greater.

(2) Veterans with service-connected disabilities rated 30 percent or 40 percent.

(3) Veterans who are former prisoners of war or who were awarded the Purple Heart, veterans who were awarded the medal of honor under section 3741, 6241, or 8741 of title 10 or section 491 of title 14, veterans with service-connected disabilities rated 10 percent or 20

percent, and veterans described in subparagraphs (B) and (C) of section 1710(a)(2) of this title.

(4) Veterans who are in receipt of increased pension based on a need of regular aid and attendance or by reason of being permanently housebound and other veterans who are catastrophically disabled.

(5) Veterans not covered by paragraphs (1) through (4) who are unable to defray the expenses of necessary care as determined under section 1722(a) of this title.

(6) All other veterans eligible for hospital care, medical services, and nursing home care under section 1710(a)(2) of this title.

(7) Veterans described in section 1710(a)(3) of this title who are eligible for treatment as a low-income family under section 3(b) of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437a(b)) for the area in which such veterans reside, regardless of whether such veterans are treated as single person families under paragraph (3)(A) of such section 3(b) or as families under paragraph (3)(B) of such section 3(b).

(8) Veterans described in section 1710(a)(3) of this title who are not covered by paragraph (7).

(b) In the design of an enrollment system under subsection (a), the Secretary—

(1) shall ensure that the system will be managed in a manner to ensure that the provision of care to enrollees is timely and acceptable in quality;

(2) may establish additional priorities within each priority group specified in subsection (a), as the Secretary determines necessary; and

(3) may provide for exceptions to the specified priorities where dictated by compelling medical reasons.

(c)(1) The Secretary may not provide hospital care or medical services to a veteran under paragraph (2) or (3) of section 1710(a) of this title unless the veteran enrolls in the system of patient enrollment established by the Secretary under subsection (a).

(2) The Secretary shall provide hospital care and medical services under section 1710(a)(1) of this title, and under subparagraph (B) of section 1710(a)(2) of this title, for the 12-month period following such veteran's discharge or release from service, to any veteran referred to in such sections for a disability specified in the applicable subparagraph of such section, notwithstanding the failure of the veteran to enroll in the system of patient enrollment referred to in subsection (a) of this section.

(Added Pub. L. 104-262, title I, §104(a)(1), Oct. 9, 1996, 110 Stat. 3182; amended Pub. L. 106-117, title I, §112(2), Nov. 30, 1999, 113 Stat. 1556; Pub. L. 107-135, title II, §202(a), Jan. 23, 2002, 115 Stat. 2457; Pub. L. 107-330, title III, §308(g)(4), Dec. 6, 2002, 116 Stat. 2828; Pub. L. 111-163, title V, §512, May 5, 2010, 124 Stat. 1164.)

AMENDMENTS

2010—Subsec. (a)(3). Pub. L. 111-163 inserted “veterans who were awarded the medal of honor under section 3741, 6241, or 8741 of title 10 or section 491 of title 14,” after “the Purple Heart.”

2002—Subsec. (a)(7), (8). Pub. L. 107-135 added pars. (7) and (8) and struck out former par. (7) which read as fol-