

(a), the head of the Executive agency concerned shall—

(1) respond promptly to the Secretary; and

(2) consistent with the urgency of the training or readiness activity involved and the provisions of law under which the administrative action or proposed administrative action is being taken, seek to reach an agreement with the Secretary on immediate actions to attain the objective of the administrative action or proposed administrative action in a manner which eliminates or mitigates the adverse effects of the administrative action or proposed administrative action upon the training or readiness activity.

(d) MORATORIUM.—(1) Subject to paragraph (2), upon notification with respect to an administrative action or proposed administrative action under subsection (a), the administrative action or proposed administrative action shall cease to be effective with respect to the Department of Defense until the earlier of—

(A) the end of the five-day period beginning on the date of the notification; or

(B) the date of an agreement between the head of the Executive agency concerned and the Secretary as a result of the consultations under subsection (c).

(2) Paragraph (1) shall not apply with respect to an administrative action or proposed administrative action if the head of the Executive agency concerned determines that the delay in enforcement of the administrative action or proposed administrative action will pose an actual threat of an imminent and substantial endangerment to public health or the environment.

(e) EFFECT OF LACK OF AGREEMENT.—(1) If the head of an Executive agency and the Secretary do not enter into an agreement under subsection (c)(2), the Secretary shall submit a written notification to the President who shall take final action on the matter.

(2) Not later than 30 days after the date on which the President takes final action on a matter under paragraph (1), the President shall submit to the committees referred to in subsection (a) a notification of the action.

(f) LIMITATION ON DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY.—The head of an Executive agency may not delegate any responsibility under this section.

(g) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term “Executive agency” has the meaning given such term in section 105 of title 5, except that the term does not include the Government Accountability Office.

(Added Pub. L. 105–85, div. A, title III, §325(a), Nov. 18, 1997, 111 Stat. 1678; amended Pub. L. 106–65, div. A, title X, §1067(1), Oct. 5, 1999, 113 Stat. 774; Pub. L. 108–375, div. A, title X, §1084(c)(3), Oct. 28, 2004, 118 Stat. 2061.)

AMENDMENTS

2004—Subsec. (g). Pub. L. 108–375 substituted “Government Accountability Office” for “General Accounting Office”.

1999—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 106–65 substituted “and the Committee on Armed Services” for “and the Committee on National Security”.

§ 2015. Program to assist members in obtaining professional credentials

(a) PROGRAM REQUIRED.—The Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Homeland Security, with respect to the Coast Guard when it is not operating as a service in the Navy, shall carry out a program to enable members of the armed forces to obtain, while serving in the armed forces, professional credentials that translate into civilian occupations.

(b) PAYMENT OF EXPENSES.—(1) Under the program required by this section, the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Homeland Security, with respect to the Coast Guard when it is not operating as a service in the Navy, shall provide for the payment of expenses of members for professional accreditation, Federal occupational licenses, State-imposed and professional licenses, professional certification, and related expenses.

(2) The authority under paragraph (1) may not be used to pay the expenses of a member to obtain professional credentials that are a prerequisite for appointment in the armed forces.

(c) QUALITY ASSURANCE OF CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS AND STANDARDS.—(1) Commencing not later than three years after the date of the enactment of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016, each Secretary concerned shall ensure that any credentialing program used in connection with the program under subsection (a) meets one of the requirements specified in paragraph (2).

(2) The requirements for a credentialing program specified in this paragraph are that the credentialing program—

(A) is accredited by a nationally-recognized, third-party personnel certification program accreditor;

(B)(i) is sought or accepted by employers within the industry or sector involved as a recognized, preferred, or required credential for recruitment, screening, hiring, retention, or advancement purposes; and

(ii) where appropriate, is endorsed by a nationally-recognized trade association or organization representing a significant part of the industry or sector;

(C) grants licenses that are recognized by the Federal Government or a State government; or

(D) meets credential standards of a Federal agency.

(d) REGULATIONS.—(1) The Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Homeland Security shall prescribe regulations to carry out this section.

(2) The regulations shall apply uniformly to the armed forces to the extent practicable.

(3) The regulations shall include the following:

(A) Requirements for eligibility for participation in the program under this section.

(B) A description of the professional credentials and occupations covered by the program.

(C) Mechanisms for oversight of the payment of expenses and the provision of other benefits under the program.

(D) Such other matters in connection with the payment of expenses and the provision of other benefits under the program as the Secretaries consider appropriate.

(e) EXPENSES DEFINED.—In this section, the term “expenses” means expenses for class room instruction, hands-on training (and associated materials), manuals, study guides and materials, text books, processing fees, and test fees and related fees.

(Added Pub. L. 109-163, div. A, title V, § 538(a), Jan. 6, 2006, 119 Stat. 3250; amended Pub. L. 113-291, div. A, title V, § 551(a), Dec. 19, 2014, 128 Stat. 3376; Pub. L. 114-92, div. A, title V, § 559, Nov. 25, 2015, 129 Stat. 827; Pub. L. 114-328, div. A, title V, § 561, Dec. 23, 2016, 130 Stat. 2137; Pub. L. 115-232, div. A, title V, § 556, Aug. 13, 2018, 132 Stat. 1773.)

REFERENCES IN TEXT

The date of the enactment of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016, referred to in subsec. (c)(1), is the date of enactment of Pub. L. 114-92, which was approved Nov. 25, 2015.

AMENDMENTS

2018—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 115-232 substituted “that translate into civilian occupations.” for “related to military training and skills that—

“(1) are acquired during service in the armed forces; and

“(2) translate into civilian occupations.”

2016—Subsec. (a)(1). Pub. L. 114-328, § 561(a), struck out “incident to the performance of their military duties” after “in the armed forces”.

Subsec. (c)(1). Pub. L. 114-328, § 561(b)(1), substituted “meets one of the requirements specified in paragraph (2).” for “is accredited by an accreditation body that meets the requirements specified in paragraph (2).”

Subsec. (c)(2). Pub. L. 114-328, § 561(b)(2), added par. (2) and struck out former par. (2) which read as follows: “The requirements for accreditation bodies specified in this paragraph are requirements that an accreditation body—

“(A) be an independent body that has in place mechanisms to ensure objectivity and impartiality in its accreditation activities;

“(B) meet a recognized national or international standard that directs its policy and procedures regarding accreditation;

“(C) apply a recognized national or international certification standard in making its accreditation decisions regarding certification bodies and programs;

“(D) conduct on-site visits, as applicable, to verify the documents and records submitted by credentialing bodies for accreditation;

“(E) have in place policies and procedures to ensure due process when addressing complaints and appeals regarding its accreditation activities;

“(F) conduct regular training to ensure consistent and reliable decisions among reviewers conducting accreditations; and

“(G) meet such other criteria as the Secretary concerned considers appropriate in order to ensure quality in its accreditation activities.”

2015—Subsecs. (c) to (e). Pub. L. 114-92 added subsec. (c) and redesignated former subsecs. (c) and (d) as (d) and (e), respectively.

2014—Pub. L. 113-291 amended section generally. Prior to amendment, section related to payment of certain expenses to obtain professional credentials.

PILOT PROGRAM ON EARNING BY SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES MEDICS OF CREDIT TOWARD A PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT DEGREE

Pub. L. 115-232, div. A, title VII, § 735, Aug. 13, 2018, 132 Stat. 1819, provided that:

“(a) IN GENERAL.—The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs may conduct a pilot program to assess the feasibility and advisability of partnerships between special operations forces and institutions of

higher education, and health care systems if determined appropriate by the Assistant Secretary for purposes of the pilot program, through which special operations forces medics earn credit toward the master’s degree of physician assistant for military operational work and training performed by the medics.

“(b) DURATION.—The Assistant Secretary shall conduct the pilot program for a period not to exceed five years.

“(c) CLINICAL TRAINING.—Partnerships under subsection (a) shall permit medics participating in the pilot program to conduct clinical training at medical facilities of the Department of Defense and the civilian sector.

“(d) EVALUATION.—The evaluation of work and training performed by medics for which credits are earned under the pilot program shall comply with civilian clinical evaluation standards applicable to the awarding of the master’s degree of physician assistant.

“(e) REPORTS.—

“(1) INITIAL REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act [Aug. 13, 2018], the Secretary of Defense shall submit to the Committees on Armed Services of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report on the pilot program that shall include the following:

“(A) A comprehensive framework for the military education to be provided to special operations forces medics under the pilot program, including courses of instruction at institutions of higher education and any health care systems participating in the pilot program.

“(B) Metrics to be used to assess the effectiveness of the pilot program.

“(C) A description of the mechanisms to be used by the Department, medics, or both to cover the costs of education received by medics under the pilot program through institutions of higher education or health care systems, including payment by the Department in return for a military service commitment, tuition or other educational assistance by the Department, use by medics of post-9/11 educational assistance available through the Department of Veterans Affairs, and any other mechanisms the Secretary considers appropriate for purposes of the pilot program.

“(2) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after completion of the pilot program, the Secretary shall submit to the committees of Congress referred to in paragraph (1) a final report on the pilot program. The report shall include the following:

“(A) An evaluation of the pilot program using the metrics of assessment set forth pursuant to paragraph (1)(B).

“(B) An assessment of the utility of the funding mechanisms set forth pursuant to paragraph (1)(C).

“(C) An assessment of the effects of the pilot program on recruitment and retention of medics for special operations forces.

“(D) An assessment of the feasibility and advisability of extending one or more authorities for joint professional military education under chapter 107 of title 10, United States Code, to warrant officers or enlisted personnel, and if the Secretary considers the extension of any such authorities feasible and advisable, recommendations for legislative or administrative action to so extend such authorities.

“(f) CONSTRUCTION OF AUTHORITIES.—Nothing in this section may be construed to—

“(1) authorize an officer or employee of the Federal Government to create, endorse, or otherwise incentivize a particular curriculum or degree track; or

“(2) require, direct, review, or control a State or educational institution, or the instructional content,

curriculum, and related activities of a State or educational institution.”

ENHANCEMENT OF MECHANISMS TO CORRELATE SKILLS AND TRAINING FOR MILITARY OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALTIES WITH SKILLS AND TRAINING REQUIRED FOR CIVILIAN CERTIFICATIONS AND LICENSES

Pub. L. 113-66, div. A, title V, §542, Dec. 26, 2013, 127 Stat. 762, provided that:

“(a) IMPROVEMENT OF INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES ABOUT CORRELATION.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretaries of the military departments, in coordination with the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, shall, to the maximum extent practicable, make information on civilian credentialing opportunities available to members of the Armed Forces beginning with, and at every stage of, training of members for military occupational specialties, in order to permit members—

“(A) to evaluate the extent to which such training correlates with the skills and training required in connection with various civilian certifications and licenses; and

“(B) to assess the suitability of such training for obtaining or pursuing such civilian certifications and licenses.

“(2) COORDINATION WITH TRANSITION GOALS PLANS SUCCESS PROGRAM.—Information shall be made available under paragraph (1) in a manner consistent with the Transition Goals Plans Success (GPS) program.

“(3) TYPES OF INFORMATION.—The information made available under paragraph (1) shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

“(A) Information on the civilian occupational equivalents of military occupational specialties (MOS).

“(B) Information on civilian license or certification requirements, including examination requirements.

“(C) Information on the availability and opportunities for use of educational benefits available to members of the Armed Forces, as appropriate, corresponding training, or continuing education that leads to a certification exam in order to provide a pathway to credentialing opportunities.

“(4) USE AND ADAPTATION OF CERTAIN PROGRAMS.—In making information available under paragraph (1), the Secretaries of the military departments may use and adapt appropriate portions of the Credentialing Opportunities On-Line (COOL) programs of the Army and the Navy and the Credentialing and Educational Research Tool (CERT) of the Air Force.

“(b) IMPROVEMENT OF ACCESS OF ACCREDITED CIVILIAN CREDENTIALING AND RELATED ENTITIES TO MILITARY TRAINING CONTENT.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretaries of the military departments, in coordination with the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, shall, to the maximum extent practicable consistent with national security and privacy requirements, make available to entities specified in paragraph (2), upon request of such entities, information such as military course training curricula, syllabi, and materials, levels of military advancement attained, and professional skills developed.

“(2) ENTITIES.—The entities specified in this paragraph are the following:

“(A) Civilian credentialing agencies.

“(B) Entities approved by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, or by State approving agencies, for purposes of the use of educational assistance benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

“(3) CENTRAL REPOSITORY.—The actions taken pursuant to paragraph (1) may include the establishment of a central repository of information on training and training materials provided members in connection with military occupational specialties that is read-

ily accessible by entities specified in paragraph (2) in order to meet requests described in paragraph (1).”

PILOT PROGRAM ON RECEIPT OF CIVILIAN CREDENTIALING FOR SKILLS REQUIRED FOR MILITARY OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALTIES

Pub. L. 112-81, div. A, title V, §558, Dec. 31, 2011, 125 Stat. 1418, as amended by Pub. L. 112-239, div. A, title V, §543, Jan. 2, 2013, 126 Stat. 1737, provided that:

“(a) PILOT PROGRAM REQUIRED.—Commencing not later than nine months after the date of the enactment of this Act [Dec. 31, 2011], the Secretary of Defense shall carry out a pilot program to assess the feasibility and advisability of permitting enlisted members of the Armed Forces to obtain civilian credentialing or licensing for skills required for military occupational specialties (MOS) or qualification for duty specialty codes.

“(b) ELEMENTS.—In carrying out the pilot program, the Secretary shall—

“(1) designate not less than three military occupational specialties or duty specialty codes for coverage under the pilot program;

“(2) consider utilizing industry-recognized certifications or licensing standards for civilian occupational skills comparable to the specialties or codes so designated; and

“(3) permit enlisted members of the Armed Forces to obtain the credentials or licenses required for the specialties or codes so designated through civilian credentialing or licensing entities, institutions, or bodies selected by the Secretary for purposes of the pilot program, whether concurrently with military training, at the completion of military training, or both.

“(c) DURATION.—The Secretary shall complete the pilot program by not later than five years after the date of the commencement of the pilot program.

“(d) REPORT.—Not later than one year after commencement of the pilot program, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the pilot program. The report shall set forth the following:

“(1) The number of enlisted members who participated in the pilot program.

“(2) A description of the costs incurred by the Department of Defense in connection with the receipt by members of credentialing or licensing under the pilot program.

“(3) A comparison of the cost associated with receipt by members of credentialing or licensing under the pilot program with the cost of receipt of similar credentialing or licensing by recently-discharged veterans of the Armed Forces under programs currently operated by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Labor.

“(4) The recommendation of the Secretary as to the feasibility and advisability of expanding the pilot program to additional military occupational specialties or duty specialty codes, and, if such expansion is considered feasible and advisable, a list of the military occupational specialties and duty specialty codes recommended for inclusion in the expansion.”

§ 2016. Undergraduate nurse training program: establishment through agreement with academic institution

(a) ESTABLISHMENT AUTHORIZED.—(1) To increase the number of nurses in the armed forces, the Secretary of Defense may enter into an agreement with one or more academic institutions to establish and operate an undergraduate program (in this section referred to as a “undergraduate nurse training program”) under which participants will earn a bachelor of science degree in nursing and serve as a member of the armed forces.

(2) The Secretary of Defense may authorize the participation of members of the other uni-