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(Original Signature of Member)

112TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. _____

To amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the use of teleconsultation, teleretinal imaging, telemedicine, and telehealth coordination services for the provision of health care to veterans, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Ms. HOCHUL introduced the following bill; which was referred to the
Committee on _____

A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the use of teleconsultation, teleretinal imaging, telemedicine, and telehealth coordination services for the provision of health care to veterans, 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’ Telehealth
5 and Telemedicine Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. TELECONSULTATION AND TELEMEDICINE.**

2 (a) TELECONSULTATION AND TELERETINAL IMAG-
3 ING.—

4 (1) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter I of chapter 17
5 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by add-
6 ing at the end the following new section:

7 **“§ 1709. Teleconsultation and teleretinal imaging**

8 “(a) TELECONSULTATION.—(1) The Secretary shall
9 carry out a program to increase the use of teleconsulta-
10 tion, telehealth, telemedicine, and home telehealth by the
11 Department.

12 “(2) The Secretary shall, in consultation with appro-
13 priate professional societies, promulgate technical and
14 clinical care standards for the use of teleconsultation serv-
15 ices within facilities of the Department.

16 “(b) TELERETINAL IMAGING.—(1) The Secretary
17 shall carry out a program to increase the use of teleretinal
18 imaging by the Department in each Veterans Integrated
19 Services Network.

20 “(2) In each fiscal year beginning with fiscal year
21 2013 and ending with fiscal year 2018, the Secretary shall
22 increase the number of patients enrolled in each teleretinal
23 imaging program under paragraph (1) by not less than
24 five percent from the number of patients enrolled in each
25 respective program in the previous fiscal year.

1 “(c) ANNUAL REPORTS.—Not later than March 1 of
2 each year, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees
3 on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and House of Rep-
4 resentatives a report on the Department’s implementation
5 of telehealth and telemedicine programs, including the
6 program of teleconsultation, telehealth, telemedicine, and
7 home telehealth under subsection (a) and the program of
8 teleretinal imaging under subsection (b).

9 “(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

10 “(1) The term ‘home telehealth’ includes the
11 use of telecommunication technology and informa-
12 tion technology to support the monitoring, trans-
13 mission, and interpretation of clinical data derived
14 from patients situated in a home, community, or
15 other non-health-care facility setting.

16 “(2) The term ‘teleconsultation’ includes the
17 use by a health care provider of telecommunication
18 technology and information technology to assist an-
19 other health care provider, at a distant site, in their
20 management, assessment, diagnosis, and treatment
21 of a patient.

22 “(3) The term ‘telehealth’ includes the use of
23 telecommunication technology and information tech-
24 nology to support the provision of health care in sit-

1 uations where the patient and health care provider
2 are separated by geographic distance.

3 “(4) The term ‘telemedicine’ includes the use of
4 telecommunication technology and information tech-
5 nology to support the provision of health care in sit-
6 uations where the patient and health care provider
7 are separated by geographic distance and the pro-
8 vider is directly managing the care of the patient.

9 “(5) The term ‘teleretinal imaging’ includes the
10 use of telecommunication technology and informa-
11 tion technology to support the remote assessment of
12 eye conditions.”.

13 (2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sec-
14 tions at the beginning of chapter 17 of such title is
15 amended by inserting after the item related to sec-
16 tion 1708 the following new item:

“1709. Teleconsultation and teleretinal imaging.”.

17 (b) TRAINING IN TELEMEDICINE.—

18 (1) MEDICAL RESIDENTS.—The Secretary of
19 Veterans Affairs shall require each Department of
20 Veterans Affairs facility that is involved in the train-
21 ing of medical residents to work with each university
22 concerned to develop an elective rotation in telemedi-
23 cine for such residents.

24 (2) RURAL VETERANS.—The Secretary shall
25 provide health care professionals of the Department

1 with education and training with respect to using
2 telemedicine to provide care to veterans in rural
3 areas.

4 (c) ENHANCEMENT OF VERA.—

5 (1) INCENTIVES FOR PROVISION OF TELECON-
6 SULTATION, TELERETINAL IMAGING, TELEMEDICINE,
7 AND TELEHEALTH SERVICES.—The Secretary shall
8 modify the Veterans Equitable Resource Allocation
9 system to provide incentives for the use of telecon-
10 sultation, teleretinal imaging, telemedicine, and tele-
11 health coordination services.

12 (2) INCLUSION OF TELEMEDICINE VISITS IN
13 WORKLOAD REPORTING.—The Secretary shall mod-
14 ify the Veterans Equitable Resource Allocation sys-
15 tem to require the inclusion of all telemedicine visits
16 in the calculation of facility workload.

17 (d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section, the terms “tele-
18 consultation”, “telehealth”, “telemedicine”, and “teleret-
19 inal imaging” have the meanings given such terms in sec-
20 tion 1709(d) of title 38, United States Code, as added by
21 subsection (a)(1).

1 **SEC. 3. AUTHORITY TO WAIVE COLLECTION OF COPAY-**
2 **MENTS FOR TELEHEALTH AND TELEMEDI-**
3 **CINE VISITS OF VETERANS.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter III of chapter 17 of
5 title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting after
6 section 1722A the following new section:

7 **“§ 1722B. Copayments: waiver of collection of copay-**
8 **ments for telehealth and telemedicine**
9 **visits of veterans**

10 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may waive the im-
11 position or collection of copayments for telehealth and tele-
12 medicine visits of veterans under the laws administered
13 by the Secretary.

14 “(b) DEFINITIONS.—The terms ‘telehealth’ and ‘tele-
15 medicine’ have the meanings given such terms in section
16 1709(d) of this title.”.

17 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections
18 at the beginning of chapter 17 of such title is amended
19 by inserting after the item relating to section 1722A the
20 following new item:

“1722B. Copayments: waiver of collection of copayments for telehealth and tele-
medicine visits of veterans.”.