

.....
(Original Signature of Member)

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. _____

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to conduct outreach to veterans regarding the effect of delayed payments of claims for emergency medical care furnished by non-Department of Veterans Affairs medical providers by the Office of Community Care and to direct the Secretary to submit to Congress an annual report regarding such delayed payments.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. ROUZER introduced the following bill; which was referred to the
Committee on _____

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to conduct outreach to veterans regarding the effect of delayed payments of claims for emergency medical care furnished by non-Department of Veterans Affairs medical providers by the Office of Community Care and to direct the Secretary to submit to Congress an annual report regarding such delayed payments.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Veterans’ Credit Pro-
3 tection Act”.

4 **SEC. 2. OUTREACH TO VETERANS REGARDING EFFECT OF**
5 **CERTAIN DELAYED PAYMENTS BY DEPART-**
6 **MENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICE OF**
7 **COMMUNITY CARE.**

8 (a) OUTREACH.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs
9 shall conduct outreach, including through national and
10 local veterans service organizations, to inform veterans of
11 how to resolve credit issues caused by delayed payment
12 of an eligible claim for emergency hospital care, emergency
13 medical services, or other emergency health care furnished
14 through a non-Department of Veterans Affairs provider.

15 (b) ANNUAL REPORT.—

16 (1) IN GENERAL.—During the five-year period
17 following the date of the enactment of this Act, the
18 Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall annually submit
19 to Congress a report on the effectiveness of the Of-
20 fice of Community Care (or successor office) in pro-
21 viding timely payment of proper invoices for emer-
22 gency hospital care, emergency medical services, or
23 other emergency health care furnished through non-
24 Department of Veterans Affairs providers by the re-
25 quired payment date.

26 (2) PERIODS COVERED.—

1 (A) The first report submitted under para-
2 graph (1) shall cover the five-year period pre-
3 ceding the date of the report, to the greatest
4 extent practicable. With respect to covering the
5 part of such period that occurred before Octo-
6 ber 1, 2015, the report shall evaluate the provi-
7 sion by the Veterans Integrated Service Net-
8 works of payments described in such paragraph.

9 (B) The reports following the first report
10 shall each cover the period following the date on
11 which the prior report was submitted.

12 (3) MATTERS INCLUDED.—The reports under
13 paragraph (1) shall include, for the period covered
14 by the report, the following:

15 (A) The number of veterans who contacted
16 the Secretary regarding a delayed payment that
17 negatively affected, or will potentially negatively
18 affect, the credit of the veteran.

19 (B) The number of proper invoices sub-
20 mitted, listed in a table for each quarter and
21 fiscal year of each such period that includes—

22 (i) the total amount owed by the Sec-
23 retary under the proper invoices;

24 (ii) the payment status of each proper
25 invoice, as of the date of the report; and

1 (iii) the period that elapsed until each
2 proper invoice was paid, including an ex-
3 planation of any delayed payment.

4 (C) Any comments regarding delayed pay-
5 ments made by medical providers.

6 (D) A description of the best practices that
7 the Office of Community Care (or successor of-
8 fice) can carry out to provide timely payment of
9 a proper invoice, including a plan to improve
10 such timely payments.

11 (E) With respect to pending claims for re-
12 imbursement for emergency hospital care, emer-
13 gency medical services, and other emergency
14 health care furnished through non-Department
15 of Veterans Affairs providers—

16 (i) the total number of such pending
17 claims for each hospital system of the De-
18 partment, as of the last day of the period
19 covered by the report;

20 (ii) the total number of veterans who
21 submitted such a pending claim in each
22 State, as of such day;

23 (iii) the aggregate amount of all such
24 pending claims in each State, as of such
25 day;

1 (iv) as of such day—

2 (I) the number of such pending
3 claims that have been pending for 30
4 days or longer;

5 (II) the number of such pending
6 claims that have been pending for 90
7 days or longer; and

8 (III) the number of such pending
9 claims that have been pending for 365
10 days or longer; and

11 (v) for each hospital system, for the
12 period covered by the report—

13 (I) the number of claims for re-
14 imbursement for emergency hospital
15 care, emergency medical services, and
16 other emergency health care furnished
17 through non-Department of Veterans
18 Affairs providers approved during
19 such quarter;

20 (II) the number of such claims
21 denied during such quarter; and

22 (III) the number of such claims
23 denied listed by each denial reason
24 group.

25 (c) COMPTROLLER GENERAL STUDY.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Comptroller General of
2 the United States shall conduct a study that evalu-
3 ates the effectiveness of the Office of Community
4 Care in providing timely payment of a proper invoice
5 for emergency hospital care, emergency medical serv-
6 ices, or other emergency health care furnished
7 through non-Department of Veterans Affairs pro-
8 viders by the required payment date.

9 (2) SUBMITTAL.—The Comptroller General
10 shall submit to Congress a report on the study con-
11 ducted under paragraph (1), including the total
12 amount of interest penalties paid by the Secretary of
13 Veterans Affairs by reason of a delayed payment.

14 (d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

15 (1) The term “delayed payment” means a prop-
16 er invoice that is not paid by the Secretary of Vet-
17 erans Affairs until after the required payment date.

18 (2) The term “proper invoice” has the meaning
19 given that term in section 3901(a) of title 31,
20 United States Code.

21 (3) The term “required payment date” means,
22 with respect to proper invoices for emergency hos-
23 pital care, emergency medical services, or other
24 emergency health care, the date that payment is due

1 pursuant to standards determined appropriate by
2 the Secretary.