

110TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 2179

To amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish traumatic brain injury centers.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 3, 2007

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

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## A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish traumatic brain injury centers.

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. TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY CENTERS.**

4 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Subchapter II of chapter 73  
5 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting  
6 after section 7320 the following new section:

7 **“§ 7320A. Centers for traumatic brain injury re-**  
8 **search, education, and clinical activities**

9 “(a) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this section is to  
10 provide for the improvement of the provision of health care

1 to eligible veterans with traumatic brain injuries  
2 through—

3 “(1) the conduct of research (including research  
4 on improving facilities of the Department concen-  
5 trating on traumatic brain injury care and on im-  
6 proving the delivery of traumatic brain injury care  
7 by the Department);

8 “(2) the education and training of health care  
9 personnel of the Department; and

10 “(3) the development of improved models and  
11 systems for the furnishing of traumatic brain injury  
12 care by the Department.

13 “(b) ESTABLISHMENT OF CENTERS.—(1) The Sec-  
14 retary shall establish and operate centers for traumatic  
15 brain injury research, education, and clinical activities.  
16 Such centers shall be established and operated by collabo-  
17 rating Department facilities as provided in subsection  
18 (c)(1). Each such center shall function as a center for—

19 “(A) research on traumatic brain injury;

20 “(B) the use by the Department of specific  
21 models for furnishing traumatic brain injury care;

22 “(C) education and training of health-care pro-  
23 fessionals of the Department; and

24 “(D) the development and implementation of  
25 innovative clinical activities and systems of care with

1       respect to the delivery of traumatic brain injury care  
2       by the Department.

3       “(2) The Secretary shall, upon the recommendation  
4 of the Under Secretary for Health, designate the centers  
5 under this section. In making such designations, the Sec-  
6 retary shall ensure that the centers designated are located  
7 in various geographic regions of the United States. The  
8 Secretary may designate a center under this section only  
9 if—

10               “(A) the proposal submitted for the designation  
11 of the center meets the requirements of subsection  
12 (c);

13               “(B) the Secretary makes the finding described  
14 in subsection (d); and

15               “(C) the peer review panel established under  
16 subsection (e) makes the determination specified in  
17 subsection (e)(3) with respect to that proposal.

18       “(3) Not more than five centers may be designated  
19 under this section.

20       “(4) The authority of the Secretary to establish and  
21 operate centers under this section is subject to the appro-  
22 priation of funds for that purpose.

23       “(c) PROPOSALS FOR DESIGNATION OF CENTERS.—  
24 A proposal submitted for the designation of a center under  
25 this section shall—

1           “(1) provide for close collaboration in the estab-  
2           lishment and operation of the center, and for the  
3           provision of care and the conduct of research and  
4           education at the center, by a Department facility or  
5           facilities in the same geographic area which have a  
6           mission centered on traumatic brain injury care and  
7           a Department facility in that area which has a mis-  
8           sion of providing tertiary medical care;

9           “(2) provide that no less than 50 percent of the  
10          funds appropriated for the center for support of clin-  
11          ical care, research, and education will be provided to  
12          the collaborating facility or facilities that have a  
13          mission centered on traumatic brain injury care; and

14          “(3) provide for a governance arrangement be-  
15          tween the collaborating Department facilities which  
16          ensures that the center will be established and oper-  
17          ated in a manner aimed at improving the quality of  
18          traumatic brain injury care at the collaborating fa-  
19          cility or facilities which have a mission centered on  
20          traumatic brain injury care.

21          “(d) FINDING OF SECRETARY.—The finding referred  
22          to in subsection (b)(2)(B) with respect to a proposal for  
23          designation of a site as a location of a center under this  
24          section is a finding by the Secretary, upon the rec-  
25          ommendation of the Under Secretary for Health, that the

1 facilities submitting the proposal have developed (or may  
2 reasonably be anticipated to develop) each of the following:

3           “(1) An arrangement with an accredited med-  
4 ical school that provides education and training in  
5 traumatic brain injury care and with which one or  
6 more of the participating Department facilities is af-  
7 filiated under which medical residents receive edu-  
8 cation and training in traumatic brain injury care  
9 through regular rotation through the participating  
10 Department facilities so as to provide such residents  
11 with training in the diagnosis and treatment of trau-  
12 matic brain injury.

13           “(2) An arrangement under which nursing, so-  
14 cial work, counseling, or allied health personnel re-  
15 ceive training and education in traumatic brain in-  
16 jury care through regular rotation through the par-  
17 ticipating Department facilities.

18           “(3) The ability to attract scientists who have  
19 demonstrated achievement in research—

20                   “(A) into the evaluation of innovative ap-  
21 proaches to the design of traumatic brain injury  
22 care; or

23                   “(B) into the causes, prevention, and  
24 treatment of traumatic brain injury.

1           “(4) The capability to evaluate effectively the  
2           activities of the center, including activities relating  
3           to the evaluation of specific efforts to improve the  
4           quality and effectiveness of traumatic brain injury  
5           care provided by the Department at or through indi-  
6           vidual facilities.

7           “(e) PEER REVIEW PANEL.—(1) In order to provide  
8           advice to assist the Secretary and the Under Secretary for  
9           Health to carry out their responsibilities under this sec-  
10          tion, the official within the central office of the Veterans  
11          Health Administration responsible for traumatic brain in-  
12          jury care shall establish a peer review panel to assess the  
13          scientific and clinical merit of proposals that are sub-  
14          mitted to the Secretary for the designation of centers  
15          under this section.

16          “(2) The panel shall consist of experts in the fields  
17          of traumatic brain injury research, education and training,  
18          and clinical care. Members of the panel shall serve as con-  
19          sultants to the Department.

20          “(3) The panel shall review each proposal submitted  
21          to the panel by the official referred to in paragraph (1)  
22          and shall submit to that official its views on the relative  
23          scientific and clinical merit of each such proposal. The  
24          panel shall specifically determine with respect to each such  
25          proposal whether that proposal is among those proposals

1 which have met the highest competitive standards of sci-  
2 entific and clinical merit.

3 “(4) The panel shall not be subject to the Federal  
4 Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.).

5 “(f) AWARD OF FUNDING.—Clinical and scientific in-  
6 vestigation activities at each center established under this  
7 section—

8 “(1) may compete for the award of funding  
9 from amounts appropriated for the Department of  
10 Veterans Affairs medical and prosthetics research  
11 account; and

12 “(2) shall receive priority in the award of fund-  
13 ing from such account insofar as funds are awarded  
14 to projects and activities relating to traumatic brain  
15 injury.

16 “(g) DISSEMINATION OF USEFUL INFORMATION.—  
17 The Under Secretary for Health shall ensure that infor-  
18 mation produced by the research, education and training,  
19 and clinical activities of centers established under this sec-  
20 tion that may be useful for other activities of the Veterans  
21 Health Administration is disseminated throughout the  
22 Veterans Health Administration. Such dissemination shall  
23 be made through publications, through programs of con-  
24 tinuing medical and related education provided through  
25 regional medical education centers under subchapter VI

1 of chapter 74 of this title, and through other means. Such  
2 programs of continuing medical education shall receive  
3 priority in the award of funding.

4 “(h) SUPERVISION OF CENTERS.—The official within  
5 the central office of the Veterans Health Administration  
6 responsible for traumatic brain injury care shall be re-  
7 sponsible for supervising the operation of the centers es-  
8 tablished pursuant to this section and shall provide for  
9 ongoing evaluation of the centers and their compliance  
10 with the requirements of this section.

11 “(i) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—(1)  
12 There are authorized to be appropriated to the Depart-  
13 ment of Veterans Affairs for the basic support of the re-  
14 search and education and training activities of centers es-  
15 tablished pursuant to this section such sums as may be  
16 necessary.

17 “(2) In addition to funds appropriated for a fiscal  
18 year pursuant to the authorization of appropriations in  
19 paragraph (1), the Under Secretary for Health shall allo-  
20 cate to such centers from other funds appropriated for  
21 that fiscal year generally for the Department of Veterans  
22 Affairs medical services account and the Department of  
23 Veterans Affairs medical and prosthetics research account  
24 such amounts as the Under Secretary for Health deter-

1 mines appropriate to carry out the purposes of this sec-  
2 tion.

3 “(j) ANNUAL REPORTS.—Not later than February 1  
4 of each year the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit  
5 to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and  
6 House of Representatives a report on the status and ac-  
7 tivities of the centers for traumatic brain injury research,  
8 education, and clinical activities during the preceding fis-  
9 cal year. Each such report shall include the following:

10 “(1) A description of the activities carried out  
11 at each center and the funding provided by the De-  
12 partment for such activities.

13 “(2) A description of the advances made at  
14 each of the participating facilities of the center in  
15 research, education and training, and clinical activi-  
16 ties relating to traumatic brain injury care and  
17 treatment.

18 “(3) A description of the actions taken by the  
19 Under Secretary for Health pursuant to subsection  
20 (g) to disseminate information derived from such ac-  
21 tivities throughout the Veterans Health Administra-  
22 tion.

23 “(4) The evaluation of the Secretary as to the  
24 effectiveness of the centers in fulfilling the purposes  
25 of this section.”.

1           (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections  
2 at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting  
3 after the item relating to section 7320 the following new  
4 item:

“7320A. Centers for traumatic brain injury research, education, and clinical activities.”.

