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111TH CONGRESS
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# H. R. 4006

To amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for Indian veterans health care coordinators, and for other purposes.

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IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NOVEMBER 3, 2009

Mrs. KIRKPATRICK of Arizona 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 provide for Indian veterans health care coordinators, and for other purposes.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

**SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

This Act may be cited as the "Rural, American Indian Veterans Health Care Improvement Act of 2009".

**SEC. 2. IMPROVEMENT OF CARE OF AMERICAN INDIAN VETERANS.**

(a) INDIAN HEALTH COORDINATORS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter II of chapter 73 of title 38, United States Code is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

**"§ 7330B. Indian Veterans Health Care Coordinators**

''(a) IN GENERAL.—(1) The Secretary shall assign at each of the 10 Department Medical Centers that serve communities with the greatest number of Indian veterans per capita an official or employee of the Department to act as the coordinator of health care for Indian veterans at such Medical Center. The official or employee so assigned at a Department Medical Center shall be known as the 'Indian Veterans Health Care Coordinator' for the Medical Center.

''(2) The Secretary shall, from time to time—

''(A) survey the Department Medical Centers for purposes of identifying the 10 Department Medical Centers that currently serve communities with the greatest number of Indian veterans per capita; and

''(B) utilizing the results of the most recent survey conducted under subparagraph (A), revise the assignment of Indian Veterans Health Care Coordinators in order to assure the assignment of such coordinators to appropriate Department Medical Centers as required by paragraph (1).

"(b) DUTIES.—The duties of a Indian Veterans Health Care Coordinator shall include the following:

"(1) Improving outreach to tribal communities.

"(2) Coordinating the medical needs of Indian veterans on Indian reservations with the Veterans Health Administration and the Indian Health Service.

"(3) Expanding the access and participation of Department of Veterans Affairs, Indian Health Service, and tribal members in the Department of Veterans Affairs Tribal Veterans Representative program.

"(4) Acting as an ombudsman for Indian veterans enrolled in the health care system of the Veterans Health Administration.

"(5) Advocating for the incorporation of traditional medicine and healing in Department treatment plans for Indian veterans in need of care and services provided by the Department.

"(c) INDIAN DEFINED.—In this section, the term 'Indian' has the meaning given the term in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 450b).".

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 73 of such title is

further by inserting after the item relating to section 7330A the following new item:

"7330B. Indian Veterans Health Coordinators.".

(b) INTEGRATION OF ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORDS WITH INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and Secretary of the Interior shall enter into a memorandum of understanding to ensure that the health records of Indian veterans may be transferred electronically between facilities of the Indian Health Service and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(c) TRANSFER OF MEDICAL EQUIPMENT TO THE INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may transfer to the Indian Health Service such surplus Department of Veterans Affairs medical and information technology equipment as the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of Health and Human Services jointly consider appropriate for purposes of the Indian Health Service.

(2) TRANSPORTATION AND INSTALLATION.—In transferring medical or information technology equipment under this subsection, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may transport and install such equipment in facilities of the Indian Health Service.

(d) REPORT ON JOINT HEALTH CLINICS WITH INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall jointly submit to Congress a report on the feasability and advisability of the joint establishment and operation by the Veterans Health Administration and the Indian Health Service of health clinics on Indian reservations to serve the populations of such reservations, including Indian veterans.

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