118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. _____

To amend title 38, United States Code, to establish an external provider
scheduling program to assist the Department of Veterans Affairs in
scheduling appointments for care and services under the Veterans Com-
munity Care Program, and for other purposes.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

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Mr. MORAN (for himself and Mrs. FISCHER) introduced the following bill;
which was read twice and referred to the Committee on
_____

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A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to establish an
external provider scheduling program to assist the De-
partment of Veterans Affairs in scheduling appointments
for care and services under the Veterans Community
Care Program, 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. EXTERNAL PROVIDER SCHEDULING PROGRAM**

4   **OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

5   (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—

6   (1) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter I of chapter 17

7   of title 38, United States Code, is amended by in-

1   serting after section 1703F the following new sec-

2   tion:

"§ 1703G. External Provider Scheduling Program

4   "(a) IN GENERAL.—There is established within the

5   Department a national External Provider Scheduling Pro-

6   gram (in this section referred to as the 'Program') to as-

7   sist the Department in scheduling appointments for care

8   and services under the Veterans Community Care Pro-

9   gram under section 1703 of this title.

10   "(b) ELEMENTS OF PROGRAM.—The Program shall

11   consist of technology that allows schedulers of the Depart-

12   ment to view the schedules of health care providers partici-

13   pating in the Veterans Community Care Program under

14   section 1703 of this title and schedule, in real-time, ap-

15   pointments for care and services under such section.

16   "(c) USE OF CONTRACTS.—The Secretary shall carry

17   out the Program through an existing contract entered into

18   by the Department, if feasible, or a new contract.

19   "(d) REDUCTION IN WAIT TIMES.—The Secretary

20   shall ensure that the Program—

21   "(1) reduces the time (measured in days) from

22   referral of veterans to health care providers under

23   the Veterans Community Care Program under sec-

24   tion 1703 of this title to the actual scheduling of ap-

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1   pointments for care or services under such section;

2   and

3   ''(2) reduces the time (measured in days and

4   hours) for schedulers of the Department to schedule

5   appointments for care or services under such section.

6   ''(e) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than September

7 30 of each year through 2028, the Secretary shall submit

8 to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and

9 the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Rep-

10 resentatives a report on the progress of the Secretary in

11 establishing the Program.

12   ''(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There

13 is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary to carry

14 out the Program the following:

15   ''(1) For fiscal year 2025, $54,000,000.

16   ''(2) For fiscal year 2026, $56,000,000.

17   ''(3) For fiscal year 2027, $57,000,000.

18   ''(4) For fiscal year 2028, $59,000,000.''.

19   (2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sec-

20   tions at the beginning of chapter 17 of title 38,

21   United States Code, is amended by inserting after

22   the item relating to section 1703F the following new

23   item:

''1703G. External Provider Scheduling Program.''.

24   (b) AVAILABILITY OF PROGRAM.—The Secretary of

25 Veterans Affairs shall ensure that the national External

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1 Provider Scheduling Program established under section
2 1703G of title 38, United States Code, as added by sub-
3 section (a)(1), is available to all medical centers of the
4 Department of Veterans Affairs by not later than Sep-
5 tember 30, 2025.

6   (c) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 1703 of
7 title 38, United States Code, is amended—

8   (1) in subsection (a)(2)(A), by inserting ", in-
9   cluding pursuant to the program under section
10   1703G of this title," after "medical appointments";
11   and

12   (2) in subsection (h)(2)(B), by inserting ", in-
13   cluding pursuant to the program under section
14   1703G of this title" before the period at the end.