

115TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 1972

AN ACT

To amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to waive the requirement of certain veterans to make copayments for hospital care and medical services in the case of an error by the Department of Veterans Affairs, 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,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “VA Billing Account-
3 ability Act”.

4 **SEC. 2. AUTHORITY OF SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**
5 **TO WAIVE REQUIREMENT OF CERTAIN VET-**
6 **ERANS TO MAKE COPAYMENTS FOR CARE**
7 **AND SERVICES IN THE CASE OF DEPART-**
8 **MENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS ERROR.**

9 (a) HOSPITAL CARE, NURSING HOME CARE, AND
10 MEDICAL SERVICES.—Section 1710(f)(3) of title 38,
11 United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the
12 following new subparagraph:

13 “(G) The Secretary may waive the requirement of a
14 veteran to make a payment under this subsection or sub-
15 section (g) if—

16 “(i) an error committed by the Department or
17 an employee of the Department was the cause of de-
18 laying notification sent to the veteran of the require-
19 ment to make the payment; and

20 “(ii) the veteran received such notification later
21 than 180 days after the date on which the veteran
22 received the care or services for which the payment
23 was required.”.

24 (b) MEDICATIONS.—Section 1722A of such title is
25 amended—

1 (1) by redesignating subsection (c) as sub-
2 section (d); and

3 (2) by inserting after subsection (b) the fol-
4 lowing new subsection (c):

5 “(c) The Secretary may waive the requirement of a
6 veteran to make a payment under this section if—

7 “(1) an error committed by the Department or
8 an employee of the Department was the cause of de-
9 laying notification sent to the veteran of the require-
10 ment to make the payment; and

11 “(2) the veteran received such notification later
12 than 180 days after the date on which the veteran
13 received the medication for which the payment was
14 required.”.

15 (c) BILLING PROCEDURES.—

16 (1) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter I of chapter 17
17 of such title is amended by adding at the end the
18 following new section:

19 **“§ 1709C. Procedures for copayments**

20 “(a) CARE AT DEPARTMENT FACILITY.—(1) In re-
21 quiring a veteran to make a payment for care or services
22 provided at a medical facility of the Department pursuant
23 to this chapter, including sections 1710 and 1722A, the
24 Secretary shall provide to such veteran a notification of
25 such required payment by not later than 180 days after

1 the date on which the veteran receives the care or services
2 for which payment is required.

3 “(2) If the Secretary does not provide to a veteran
4 a notification of the required payment by the date required
5 under paragraph (1), the Secretary may not collect such
6 payment, including through a third-party entity, unless
7 the Secretary provides the veteran the following:

8 “(A) Information regarding how to apply for a
9 waiver described in section 1710(f)(3)(G) or section
10 1722A(c) of this title, as appropriate.

11 “(B) Information regarding how to establish a
12 payment plan with the Secretary.

13 “(C) Opportunity to make such a waiver or es-
14 tablish such a payment plan.

15 “(b) CARE AT NON-DEPARTMENT FACILITY.—(1) In
16 requiring a veteran to make a payment for care or services
17 provided at a non-Department facility pursuant to this
18 chapter or other provision of law, the Secretary shall pro-
19 vide to such veteran a notification of such required pay-
20 ment by not later than 18 months after the date on which
21 the veteran receives the care or services for which payment
22 is required.

23 “(2) If the Secretary does not provide to a veteran
24 a notification of the required payment by the date required
25 under paragraph (1), the Secretary may not collect such

1 payment, including through a third-party entity, unless
2 the Secretary provides the veteran the following:

3 “(A) Information regarding how to apply for a
4 waiver described in paragraph (3).

5 “(B) Information regarding how to establish a
6 payment plan with the Secretary.

7 “(C) Opportunity to make such a waiver or es-
8 tablish such a payment plan.

9 “(3) The Secretary may waive the requirement of a
10 veteran to make a payment for care or services provided
11 at a non-Department facility pursuant to this chapter or
12 other provision of law if—

13 “(A) an error committed by the Department, an
14 employee of the Department, or a non-Department
15 facility was the cause of delaying the notification
16 sent to the veteran of the requirement to make the
17 payment; and

18 “(B) the veteran received such notification after
19 the period described in paragraph (1).”.

20 (2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sec-
21 tions at the beginning of such chapter is amended
22 by inserting after the item relating to section 1709B
23 the following new item:

“1709C. Procedures for copayments.”.

1 (d) IMPROVEMENT OF PROCEDURES.—Not later than
2 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the
3 Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall—

4 (1) review the copayment billing internal con-
5 trols and notification procedures of the Department
6 of Veterans Affairs; and

7 (2) improve such controls and procedures, in-
8 cluding pursuant to the amendments made by this
9 Act.

Passed the House of Representatives May 21, 2018.

Attest:

Clerk.

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