

HR 1720

Veterans Health Care Facilities Capital Improvement Act

**Congress:** 108 (2003–2005, Ended)

**Chamber:** House

**Policy Area:** Armed Forces and National Security

**Introduced:** Apr 10, 2003

**Current Status:** Received in the Senate and Read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

**Latest Action:** Received in the Senate and Read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. (Oct 30, 2003)

**Official Text:** <https://www.congress.gov/bill/108th-congress/house-bill/1720>

Sponsor

**Name:** Rep. Simmons, Rob [R-CT-2]

**Party:** Republican • **State:** CT • **Chamber:** House

Cosponsors (4 total)

Cosponsor	Party / State	Role	Date Joined
Rep. Smith, Christopher H. [R-NJ-4]	R · NJ		Apr 10, 2003
Rep. Porter, Jon C. [R-NV-3]	R · NV		Jul 10, 2003
Rep. Brown, Henry E., Jr. [R-SC-1]	R · SC		Jul 14, 2003
Rep. LoBiondo, Frank A. [R-NJ-2]	R · NJ		Jul 14, 2003

Committee Activity

Committee	Chamber	Activity	Date
Veterans' Affairs Committee	House	Reported by	Jun 24, 2003
Veterans' Affairs Committee	Senate	Referred To	Oct 30, 2003

Subjects & Policy Tags

**Policy Area:**

Armed Forces and National Security

Related Bills

Bill	Relationship	Last Action
108 HR 116	Procedurally related	<b>Dec 6, 2003:</b> See Public Law 108-170.
108 HR 1585	Procedurally related	<b>Dec 6, 2003:</b> See Public Law 108-170.
108 HR 1832	Procedurally related	<b>Dec 6, 2003:</b> See Public Law 108-170.
108 HR 1908	Procedurally related	<b>Dec 6, 2003:</b> See Public Law 108-170.
108 HR 2349	Procedurally related	<b>Dec 6, 2003:</b> See Public Law 108-170.
108 HR 2307	Procedurally related	<b>Jun 24, 2003:</b> Provision incorporated. See H.R. 1720, Section 3.

Veterans Health Care Facilities Capital Improvement Act - (Sec. 2) Authorizes the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out major medical facility projects, using funds appropriated for FY 2004 and 2005. Allows such projects to be carried out to improve, replace, renovate, update, or establish a new patient care facility, or to improve, replace, renovate, or update, a research facility, in order to improve: (1) seismic protection related to patient safety; (2) fire safety; (3) utility systems and ancillary patient care facilities; (4) accommodation for persons with disabilities; and (5) patient care facilities to specialized programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Requires: (1) each project to be reviewed by a board independent of the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) of the Department; and (2) each board's recommendations to be considered by the Secretary prior to selection. Authorizes appropriations for such fiscal years. Directs the Comptroller General to report to the congressional veterans' committees: (1) evaluating advantages and disadvantages of congressional authorization for such projects over specific authorization by law; and (2) describing specific actions of the Secretary during FY 2004 with respect to such projects. Requires the Secretary to report to such committees on the project authorization process.

(Sec. 3) Authorizes the Secretary to carry out specified major medical facility projects for current or future Department medical facilities in: (1) Chicago, Illinois; (2) San Diego, California; (3) West Haven, Connecticut; (4) Columbus, Ohio; and (5) Pensacola, Florida. Authorizes appropriations for FY 2004 for such projects. Authorizes the Secretary to enter into major medical facilities leases for Department outpatient clinics in Charlotte, North Carolina, Clark County, Nevada, and at the site of the former Fitzsimons Army Medical Center in Aurora, Colorado.

(Sec. 4) Authorizes the Secretary to carry out major medical facility projects at the site of the former Fitzsimons Center, including inpatient and outpatient facilities providing acute, sub-acute, primary, and long-term care services. Requires consultation between the Secretary and the Secretary of Defense, which shall include consideration of establishing a Department of Veterans Affairs-Department of Defense joint health-care venture at the site. Authorizes appropriations for FY 2004 through 2006. Directs the Secretary to report to the veterans' and appropriations committees on the exercise of such authority.

(Sec. 5) Prohibits the Secretary from making a final disposal of the Lakeside Division facility in Chicago, Illinois, until the Secretary has entered into a contract for the project for such facility.

(Sec. 6) Directs the Secretary to develop a plan: (1) to establish an inpatient facility to meet veterans' hospital care needs in southern New Jersey; and (2) for hospital care needs of veterans who reside in far south Texas. Requires reports on each plan from the Secretary to the veterans' committees.

(Sec. 7) Increases from \$4 million to \$6 million the threshold cost of a major medical facility project above which funds for such project must be specifically authorized by law.

(Sec. 8) Requires the Secretary to: (1) examine the feasibility of Department coordination of its needs for veterans' inpatient hospital, medical, and long-term care services with the pending construction of a new university medical center at the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston, South Carolina; and (2) report results to the veterans' committees.

(Sec. 9) Designates the Department: (1) health care facility on South Damen Avenue in Chicago, Illinois, as the Jesse Brown Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center; and (2) outpatient clinic in New London, Connecticut, as the John J. McGuirk Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic.

(Sec. 11) Establishes in the VHA an Office of Research Oversight to advise the Under Secretary for Health on matters of compliance and assurance in human subjects protections, animal welfare, research safety, and research impropriety and misconduct. Requires the Office to function independently of VHA offices responsible for the conduct of medical research programs. Establishes an Office Director to conduct investigations and report to the Under Secretary with respect to the above matters, including appropriate recommendations for the termination, suspension, or limitation of Department research activities. Requires the Director to report: (1) to the Under Secretary, Secretary, and veterans' committees on any suspected lapse of protecting the safety of human subjects and others, including employees, in medical research programs; and (2) annually to the veterans' committees on prior-year activities.

Directs the Comptroller General to study and report to the veterans' committees on the effects of the establishment of the Office, the actions taken, and improvements in the conduct of ethical medical research in the VHA. Requires the Secretary to report to the veterans' committees on the implementation of this section.

### **Actions Timeline**

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- **Oct 30, 2003:** Received in the Senate and Read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.
- **Oct 29, 2003:** Mr. Smith (NJ) moved to suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended.
- **Oct 29, 2003:** Considered under suspension of the rules. (consideration: CR H9996-10008)
- **Oct 29, 2003:** DEBATE - The House proceeded with forty minutes of debate on H.R. 1720.
- **Oct 29, 2003:** At the conclusion of debate, the Yeas and Nays were demanded and ordered. Pursuant to the provisions of clause 8, rule XX, the Chair announced that further proceedings on the motion would be postponed.
- **Oct 29, 2003:** Considered as unfinished business. (consideration: CR H10079-10080)
- **Oct 29, 2003:** Passed/agreed to in House: On motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended Agreed to by the Yeas and Nays: (2/3 required): 417 - 0 (Roll no. 576).(text: CR H9996-9999)
- **Oct 29, 2003:** On motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended Agreed to by the Yeas and Nays: (2/3 required): 417 - 0 (Roll no. 576). (text: CR H9996-9999)
- **Oct 29, 2003:** Motion to reconsider laid on the table Agreed to without objection.
- **Oct 29, 2003:** The title of the measure was amended. Agreed to without objection.
- **Jul 15, 2003:** Reported (Amended) by the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. H. Rept. 108-210.
- **Jul 15, 2003:** Reported (Amended) by the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. H. Rept. 108-210.
- **Jul 15, 2003:** Placed on the Union Calendar, Calendar No. 116.
- **Jun 26, 2003:** Committee Consideration and Mark-up Session Held.
- **Jun 26, 2003:** Ordered to be Reported (Amended) by Voice Vote.
- **Jun 24, 2003:** Subcommittee Consideration and Mark-up Session Held.
- **Jun 24, 2003:** Forwarded by Subcommittee to Full Committee in the Nature of a Substitute by Voice Vote.
- **Jun 11, 2003:** Subcommittee Hearings Held.
- **Apr 24, 2003:** Referred to the Subcommittee on Health.
- **Apr 11, 2003:** Sponsor introductory remarks on measure. (CR E758-759)
- **Apr 10, 2003:** Introduced in House
- **Apr 10, 2003:** Introduced in House
- **Apr 10, 2003:** Referred to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.