

## S 3340

Mental Health ACCESS Act of 2012

**Congress:** 112 (2011–2013, Ended)

**Chamber:** Senate

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

**Introduced:** Jun 25, 2012

**Current Status:** Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Ordered to be reported with amendments favorably.

**Latest Action:** Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Ordered to be reported with amendments favorably. (Sep 12, 2012)

**Official Text:** <https://www.congress.gov/bill/112th-congress/senate-bill/3340>

### Sponsor

**Name:** Sen. Murray, Patty [D-WA]

**Party:** Democratic • **State:** WA • **Chamber:** Senate

### Cosponsors (8 total)

| Cosponsor                            | Party / State | Role | Date Joined  |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|------|--------------|
| Sen. Blumenthal, Richard [D-CT]      | D · CT        |      | Jun 26, 2012 |
| Sen. Durbin, Richard J. [D-IL]       | D · IL        |      | Jun 26, 2012 |
| Sen. Schumer, Charles E. [D-NY]      | D · NY        |      | Jun 27, 2012 |
| Sen. Rockefeller, John D., IV [D-WV] | D · WV        |      | Jul 18, 2012 |
| Sen. Sanders, Bernard [I-VT]         | I · VT        |      | Jul 18, 2012 |
| Sen. Begich, Mark [D-AK]             | D · AK        |      | Jul 19, 2012 |
| Sen. Shaheen, Jeanne [D-NH]          | D · NH        |      | Jul 30, 2012 |
| Sen. Tester, Jon [D-MT]              | D · MT        |      | Sep 11, 2012 |

### Committee Activity

| Committee                   | Chamber | Activity  | Date         |
|-----------------------------|---------|-----------|--------------|
| Veterans' Affairs Committee | Senate  | Markup By | Sep 12, 2012 |

### Subjects & Policy Tags

**Policy Area:**

Armed Forces and National Security

### Related Bills

*No related bills are listed.*

Mental Health Access to Continued Care and Enhancement of Support Services Act of 2012 or Mental Health ACCESS Act of 2012 - Directs the Secretary of Defense to:

- establish a position for the oversight and management of all suicide prevention and resilience programs and preventative behavioral health programs of the Department of Defense (DOD);
- develop and implement a program on the prevention of suicide among members of the Armed Forces (members);
- ensure that the continuing medical education provided to physicians in the military medical treatment system includes education and training on the triage and referral of individuals with mental health conditions;
- enter into a joint memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs providing for the sharing between DOD and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) of the results of examinations and records under the medical tracking system for members deployed overseas;
- enter into a DOD-VA MOU providing for certain combat-experienced former members to be considered for employment as VA peer counselors;
- establish an organization to discharge certain responsibilities relating to DOD research and medical practices on mental health conditions
- standardize, assess, and monitor DOD medical evaluation boards, physical evaluation boards, and physical evaluation board liaison officers;
- submit an assessment of whether the military departments are fully compliant with the required use of the VA schedule for rating disabilities in making member disability determinations;
- contract for an independent assessment of whether the mental health care benefits available to members and their beneficiaries under the TRICARE program are adequate to meet their needs; and
- submit an assessment of the adequacy of the military medical treatment system to meet member needs for inpatient behavioral health care.

Provides limited exceptions to the prohibition against the disclosure of the mental health condition of a member, the treatment of a member for such a condition, or the request of a member for such treatment.

Requires the Administrator of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) to enter into a MOU with the DOD Secretary to establish procedures under which a member may deliver a controlled substance to another member or a DOE employee for disposal under provisions of the Controlled Substances Act.

Authorizes the DOD Secretary, when determined necessary, to exempt behavioral health care providers licensed under the TRICARE program from state licensure requirements.

Directs the VA Secretary to: (1) develop and implement measures to assess VA mental health care services, as well as guidelines for the staffing of such services; and (2) carry out a national outreach program to recruit mental health providers to provide such services for the VA on a part-time, no-compensation basis.

Expands the Vet Center program of counseling to former members who served on active combat duty to include the furnishing of counseling to their family members.

Authorizes the VA Secretary to furnish mental health care to immediate family members of members currently deployed in connection with a contingency operation.

Establishes the Readjustment Counseling Service in the VA to provide veterans' readjustment and associated services.

Authorizes the VA Secretary to reimburse up to \$4,000 per year of the certification, recertification, and continuing professional education expenses of full-time VA psychiatrists.

Requires (under current law, authorizes) the VA Secretary to carry out a counseling program for veteran peer counselors. Requires such program, as well as peer outreach and peer support services, to be carried out at each VA medical center.

### **Actions Timeline**

---

- **Sep 12, 2012:** Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Ordered to be reported with amendments favorably.
- **Jun 28, 2012:** Sponsor introductory remarks on measure. (CR S4719)
- **Jun 27, 2012:** Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Hearings held. Hearings printed: S.Hrg. 112-668.
- **Jun 25, 2012:** Introduced in Senate
- **Jun 25, 2012:** Sponsor introductory remarks on measure. (CR S4461-4463)
- **Jun 25, 2012:** Read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.