

## **Veterans Mental and Behavioral Health Quality of Care Act- H.R. 3811**

**Introduction:** H.R. 3811, introduced in the 118th Congress, aims to improve the quality of mental and behavioral health care for the U.S veterans. The bill mandates an independent study to evaluate the quality of care provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs versus non-VA healthcare providers. The legislation seeks to identify gaps in service delivery and recommend improvements to ensure veterans receive the highest standard of mental care.

**Background:** The mental and behavioral health of U.S veterans is a significant public health concern. Many veterans experience barriers to accessing high-quality mental health services, leading to disparities in care and increased risk for conditions such as PTSD, depression, and suicide. Nurses, as patient advocates, play a key role in recognizing these challenges and supporting policies that enhance care delivery. Over the years, policymakers have acknowledged the need for consistent, evidence-based mental health care across all providers treating veterans. This bill builds upon previous efforts to enhance veteran health care access and quality.

### **Evidence:**

A systematic review comparing VA and non-VA mental health care quality found that VA facilities often perform equally or better than non-VA providers, highlighting the need for thorough evaluations to identify strengths and areas for improvement in service delivery (Huang, 2016).

Research indicates that implementing collaborative care models in mental health services reduces hospital admissions among veterans, demonstrating that financial investment in these evidence-based strategies improves care outcomes (VA Office of Research & Development, 2023).

Studies have shown that integrating mental health care into primary care settings within the VA improves access to high-quality treatment, patient engagement, and clinical outcomes. Enhancing collaboration between VA and non-VA providers can help standardize care and reduce service gaps for veterans (VA Office of Research & Development, 2023).

Ongoing research and policy development are crucial to address the evolving mental health needs of veterans. Evaluations of the VA's Primary Care–Mental Health Integration (PC-MHI) program have demonstrated that integrated mental health care improves access to treatment and patient satisfaction, underscoring the importance of sustained research efforts to enhance these services (VA Office of Research & Development, 2023).

### **Recommendation:**

- Support passage of H. R. 3811 to ensure a comprehensive evaluation of VA and non-VA mental health care quality.

- Allocate necessary funding to implement the finding of the external study and improve care delivery.
- Enhance collaboration between VA and non-VA providers to standardize mental health care and reduce service gaps.
- Advocate for continued research and policy development to support veterans mental health initiatives.

## References

*Evidence Synthesis Program VA versus Non-VA Quality of Care: A Systematic Review.*

(n.d.).

<https://www.hsrd.research.va.gov/publications/esp/quality-of-care-review.pdf>

*Huang, C., Sloss, E., Price, R. A., Hussey, P., Farmer, C., & Gidengil, C. (2016).*

*Comparing VA and Non-VA Quality of Care: A Systematic Review. Journal of General Internal Medicine, 32(1), 105.*

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