

104TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 798

To amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a permanent, confidential database and toll-free telephone line for the collection of medical information concerning members of the Armed Forces and veterans.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 2, 1995

Mr. GEJDENSON introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a permanent, confidential database and toll-free telephone line for the collection of medical information concerning members of the Armed Forces and veterans.

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. VETERANS' MEDICAL DATABASE.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 17 of title 38, United
5 States Code, is amended by adding at the end of sub-
6 chapter I the following new section:

1 **“§ 1705. Confidential medical history database**

2 “(a) In order to provide information for the detection
3 of patterns of illnesses among members of the Armed
4 Forces and veterans, the Secretary shall maintain a
5 database consisting of the medical histories of individuals
6 described in subsection (c), together with their military
7 service histories and relevant personal information. The
8 Secretary shall ensure that the information in the
9 database is maintained in a format that is compatible with
10 information in other health registries maintained by the
11 Secretary.

12 “(b) The Secretary shall regularly monitor the
13 database for patterns of illnesses that may correlate to
14 military service or to military service in particular areas,
15 at particular times, or in particular service specialities.

16 “(c) The database shall be compiled concerning the
17 medical history of individuals who as members of the
18 Armed Forces are deployed for any operational mission
19 (beginning with the operation in Somalia in 1992–1993)
20 and the spouses and children of those members.

21 “(d) Information may be included in the database
22 concerning an individual only with the permission of that
23 individual (or, in the case of a child, a parent of that
24 child). The identity of any individual providing informa-
25 tion for inclusion in the database of information shall be
26 confidential, and information provided by any such indi-

1 vidual may not, without the consent of that individual, be
2 disclosed outside the Department or to any other entity
3 within the Department in a manner that would enable the
4 identification of the individual providing the information.

5 “(e)(1) The Secretary shall maintain a toll-free tele-
6 phone number to be available for members of the Armed
7 Forces and veterans to report to the Secretary information
8 for inclusion in the database. The Secretary shall staff the
9 number with employees of the Department. Employees
10 staffing the number shall obtain information for the
11 database relating to symptoms and medical history, mili-
12 tary service history, and personal information in as uni-
13 form manner as possible.

14 “(2) In establishing the toll-free telephone number re-
15 porting system under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall
16 consult with the Secretary of Defense and representatives
17 of veterans service organizations recognized by the Sec-
18 retary under section 5902 of this title to determine the
19 appropriate information to be sought from members and
20 veterans calling that number.

21 “(f) With the permission of the member or veteran,
22 the Secretary shall include in the database information
23 concerning a member or veteran (or the spouse or child
24 of the member or veteran) from the following sources:

1 “(1) A claim for disability benefits filed with
2 the Department.

3 “(2) A medical history in the custody of the
4 Secretary of Defense.

5 “(3) Information from health screenings con-
6 ducted by the Secretary.

7 “(g) The Secretary shall (subject to subsection (d))
8 make information in the database available to accredited
9 institutions of higher education and any other institution
10 the Secretary considers appropriate for medical studies
11 and related research activities. The Secretary shall make
12 available to such institutions general statistical informa-
13 tion concerning information in the database.

14 “(h) The Secretary shall submit to the Committees
15 on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and House of Rep-
16 resentatives an annual report on the operation of the
17 database and the toll-free telephone number under this
18 section. The Secretary shall include in the report—

19 “(1) information on the number of persons pro-
20 viding information for inclusion in the database;

21 “(2) the current status of monitoring of the
22 database under subsection (b) for detection of pat-
23 terns of illnesses; and

1 “(3) the types of illnesses recorded in the
2 database and the number of cases of each such ill-
3 ness.”.

4 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections
5 at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting
6 after the item relating to section 1704 the following new
7 item:

“1705. Confidential medical history database.”.

