

116TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

**S.** \_\_\_\_\_

To amend the Public Health Service Act to establish a national telehealth program, and for other purposes.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

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Mrs. BLACKBURN (for herself and Mr. CRAMER) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_

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**A BILL**

To amend the Public Health Service Act to establish a national telehealth program, 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,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Telehealth Across  
5 State Lines Act of 2019”.

6 **SEC. 2. NATIONAL TELEHEALTH PROGRAM.**

7 Subpart I of part D of title III of the Public Health  
8 Service Act (42 U.S.C. 254b et seq.) is amended by adding  
9 at the end the following:

1 **“SEC. 330N. NATIONAL TELEHEALTH PROGRAM.**

2 “(a) UNIFORM NATIONAL BEST PRACTICES.—

3 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall, in con-  
4 sultation with a range of stakeholders including the  
5 entities listed in paragraph (3), issue guidance on  
6 uniform best practices for the provision of telehealth  
7 across State lines.

8 “(2) OBJECTIVE.—The objective of the best  
9 practices issued under paragraph (1) shall be to, not  
10 later than 5 years after the date of enactment of  
11 this section, provide high-quality telehealth in rural  
12 areas across the United States.

13 “(3) CONSULTATION.—The entities listed in  
14 this paragraph include—

15 “(A) technology experts;

16 “(B) data security experts;

17 “(C) primary care providers;

18 “(D) specialist providers;

19 “(E) mental health providers;

20 “(F) academic medical centers;

21 “(G) Federally qualified health centers, as  
22 defined in section 1861(aa) of the Social Secu-  
23 rity Act;

24 “(H) State, local, or tribal health depart-  
25 ments;

26 “(I) critical access hospitals; and

1           “(J) any Federal agency with expertise in  
2           the provision of telecommunications or tele-  
3           health.

4           “(4) REPORTS.—The Secretary shall, not less  
5           than once every year beginning 1 year after the date  
6           of enactment of this section and ending on the date  
7           on which the guidance under paragraph (1) is  
8           issued, report to the Committee on Health, Edu-  
9           cation, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate and the  
10          Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House  
11          of Representatives on the progress of such guidance.

12          “(b) GRANT PROGRAM.—

13                 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall for  
14                 each of fiscal years 2020 through 2024 award  
15                 grants to eligible entities described in paragraph (2)  
16                 for the expansion of telehealth programs to rural  
17                 areas.

18                 “(2) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—To be eligible to re-  
19                 ceive a grant under this subsection, an entity shall—

20                         “(A) demonstrate that it is operating, on  
21                         the date on which the entity submits an appli-  
22                         cation under subparagraph (B), an effective  
23                         telehealth program (as determined in accord-  
24                         ance with criteria established by the Secretary);  
25                         and

1           “(B) submit an application to the Sec-  
2           retary at such time, in such manner, and con-  
3           taining such information as the Secretary may  
4           reasonably require, including a plan to expand  
5           the telehealth program operated by the entity to  
6           rural areas.

7           “(3) STUDY.—Not later than 3 years after the  
8           date of enactment of this section, the Secretary  
9           shall—

10           “(A) complete a study on the grant pro-  
11           gram under this subsection, including the suc-  
12           cesses and challenges of the program, lessons  
13           the Secretary has learned with respect to the  
14           program, and best practices for telehealth pro-  
15           grams; and

16           “(B) submit a report on such study to the  
17           Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and  
18           Pensions of the Senate and the Committee on  
19           Energy and Commerce of the House of Rep-  
20           resentatives.

21           “(4) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—  
22           There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out  
23           this subsection, \$20,000,000 for each of fiscal years  
24           2020 through 2024.

