

Veterans Access Protection through Staffing Standards Act of 2025

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “**Veterans Access Protection through Staffing Standards Act of 2025.**”

SECTION 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

1. Veterans’ access to care depends directly on having sufficient and properly allocated staff in essential roles.
 2. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has repeatedly made workforce reductions and reorganizations without validated staffing models to determine safe levels.
 3. GAO and OIG have issued multiple recommendations since the late 1990s calling for the VA to adopt and maintain credible staffing standards.
 4. Despite decades of warnings, VA continues to make workforce decisions driven by budget pressures or political considerations rather than validated models.
 5. Eliminating essential staff without evidence-based models places veterans at risk, overburdens remaining employees, and undermines access to timely care.
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SECTION 3. DEFINITIONS.

For purposes of this Act:

1. “**Staffing model**” means a validated, evidence-based methodology for determining the number and type of staff required to meet patient demand, consistent with GAO and OIG

recommendations.

2. **“Validated”** means independently tested, peer-reviewed, or confirmed by GAO, OIG, or an academic/research partner.
3. **“Essential roles”** means positions directly tied to patient access, continuity of care, and clinical safety.

SECTION 4. REQUIREMENT TO MAINTAIN STAFFING MODELS.

(a) **Annual Reporting.**— The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall develop, maintain, and publish validated staffing models for all major clinical and administrative categories, including but not limited to:

1. Medical Support Assistants (schedulers);
2. Nurses;
3. Physicians;
4. Supervisors and access coordinators;
5. Other mission-critical roles identified under Section 6 of this Act.

(b) **Transparency.**— Such models shall be reported annually to Congress and published on a publicly accessible VA website.

SECTION 5. PROTECTION AGAINST WORKFORCE CUTS WITHOUT MODELS.

(a) **Requirement.**— No reductions in force, reorganizations, or position eliminations may occur without documented application of validated staffing models.

(b) **Certification.**— Prior to implementing workforce changes, the Secretary shall certify to Congress that staffing model requirements have been applied.

(c) **Prohibition.**— Any workforce action taken in violation of this section shall be null and void.

SECTION 6. CORRECTIVE ACTION AND ENFORCEMENT.

(a) **Corrective Action.**— If GAO or OIG determines that staffing models are not maintained, outdated, or improperly applied, VA shall submit a corrective action plan within 90 days.

(b) **Enforcement.**— Congress may withhold funding for workforce reductions or reorganizations until validated models are in place and verified.

SECTION 7. IMPLEMENTATION AND OVERSIGHT.

(a) **Timeline.**— The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall implement this Act no later than 1 year after enactment.

(b) **Annual GAO Report.**— The Comptroller General shall provide Congress with an annual report evaluating:

1. VA's compliance with staffing model requirements;
 2. The sufficiency of models in protecting access to care;
 3. The impact of workforce changes on veterans' wait times and access outcomes.
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SECTION 8. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This Act shall take effect 180 days after enactment.