



## *Written Informed Consent Act*

Senator Sheehy's *Written Informed Consent Act* would ensure veterans are aware of the intended and side effects of certain high-risk drugs they are prescribed, and help curtail the pervasive overprescription issue within the VA.

### **Background:**

The average veteran utilizing VA healthcare receives nearly 30 prescriptions per year, and more than 64 percent of veterans using VA healthcare receive at least one duplicative prescription. Many of these drugs, specifically antipsychotics, stimulants, antidepressants, anxiolytics, and narcotics, carry the side effect of suicidal ideation. Veteran suicide rates have increased by more than 49 percent since 2001.

During the first Trump Administration, VA Secretary David Shulkin mandated that written informed consent (WIC) be applied to "long-term opioids". By 2023, the number of veterans prescribed opioids was 67 percent lower than in 2012. WIC is an effective tool in ensuring that veterans are cognizant of the risks associated with certain drugs and curbing their overprescription.

### **What the bill does:**

This bill amends VHA Directive 1005 (dated May 13, 2020, and titled "Informed Consent for Long-term Opioid Therapy for Pain") to apply to the following types of medication: antipsychotics, stimulants, antidepressants, anxiolytics, and narcotics. Thus, when VHA prescribes one of these types of medications to a veteran, they first need a signed consent form from the veteran stating that they have been informed of all known side effects.

**Senate Cosponsors:** Senator Tuberville

**House Sponsor and Cosponsors (H.R. 4837):** Reps. Gus Bilirakis, Cleo Fields, Jack Bergman, Keith Self, Jefferson Van Drew, French Hill, and Thomas Massie

### **Endorsements:**

American Legion, VFW, IAVA, DAV, Jewish War Veterans, Reserve Officers Association, Association of the United States Navy, Special Operations Association of America, Military-Veteran Advocacy, Fleet Reserves Association, Navy SEAL Foundation, Vietnam Veterans of America, Air Force Sergeants Association, Grunt Style, American Veterans, Military Order of the Purple Heart, Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors

*For more information, please contact Heidi Thom with Senator Sheehy at 8-1931 or [heidi\\_thom@sheehy.senate.gov](mailto:heidi_thom@sheehy.senate.gov)*