SEC. ___. EXTENSION OF ENHANCED APPOINTMENT AND COMPENSATION AUTHORITY FOR CIVILIAN PERSONNEL FOR CARE AND TREATMENT OF WOUNDED AND INJURED MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES.

(a) EXTENSION.—Subsection (c) of section 1599c of title 10, United States Code, is amended by striking "December 31, 2015" both places it appears and inserting "December 31, 2020".

(b) REPEAL OF FULFILLED REQUIREMENT.—Such section is further amended—

(1) by striking subsection (b); and

(2) by redesignating subsection (c), as amended by subsection (a), as subsection (b).

(c) REPEAL OF REFERENCES TO CERTAIN TITLE 5 AUTHORITIES.—Subsection (a)(2)(A) of such section is amended by striking "sections 3304, 5333, and 5753 of title 5" and inserting "section 3304 of title 5".

Section-by-Section Analysis

This proposal would extend an existing Expedited Hiring Authority (EHA) for civilian personnel under title 10, United States Code, by changing the termination dates to December 31, 2020 from December 31, 2015. This authority provides the Military Health System (MHS) with an efficient and expedient method of recruiting and hiring select healthcare professionals. It also provides a vehicle that can be used to adapt authorities used by the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) of the Department of Veterans Affairs under chapter 74 of title 38, United States Code, for use in the Department of Defense (DoD). Extending the termination dates allows programs already implemented to continue to operate and allows DoD to implement further authorities to hire, retain, and pay individuals in critical and shortage healthcare occupations. DoD has recently implemented the Physicians and Dentists Pay Plan, which incorporates title 38 authorities granted under 10 USC 1599c. It is also in the process of developing pay systems for nurses that are similar to those used by the VHA and must depend upon the authorities in 10 USC 1599c.

This proposal also would eliminate subsection (b), which required the Secretaries of the military departments to develop, implement and assess authorities, strategies and best practices to

facilitate the implementation of efficiencies, which reduce the time to fill vacancies. The requirements of this paragraph have been fulfilled and efficiencies are being developed.

Finally, subsection (c) of the proposal eliminates the unnecessary references to sections 5333 and 5753 of title 10, United States Code.

Budget Implications: There are no budgetary implications associated with this proposal. EHA is a noncompetitive appointment authority already in use. There is no requirement to do competitive examining when using EHA. We expect to continue to see cost savings with no requirement to develop competitive certifications or to perform comprehensive audits on a competitive examining process.

Changes to Existing Law: This proposal would amend section 1599c of title 10, United States Code, as follows:

§ 1599c. Health care professionals: enhanced appointment and compensation authority for personnel for care and treatment of wounded and injured members of the armed forces

(a) IN GENERAL.—(1) The Secretary of Defense may, at the discretion of the Secretary, exercise any authority for the appointment and pay of health care personnel under chapter 74 of title 38 for purposes of the recruitment, employment, and retention of civilian health care professionals for the Department of Defense if the Secretary determines that the exercise of such authority is necessary in order to provide or enhance the capacity of the Department to provide care and treatment for members of the armed forces who are wounded or injured on active duty in the armed forces and to support the ongoing patient care and medical readiness, education, and training requirements of the Department of Defense.

(2)(A) For purposes of section~~s~~ 3304~~, 5333, and 5753~~ of title 5, the Secretary of Defense may—

(i) designate any category of medical or health professional positions within the Department of Defense as a shortage category occupation or critical need occupation; and

(ii) utilize the authorities in such sections to recruit and appoint qualified persons directly in the competitive service to positions so designated.

(B) In using the authority provided by this paragraph, the Secretary shall apply the principles of preference for the hiring of veterans and other persons established in subchapter I of chapter 33 of title 5.

(C) Any designation by the Secretary for purposes of subparagraph (A)(i) shall be based on an analysis of current and future Department of Defense workforce requirements.

~~(b) RECRUITMENT OF PERSONNEL.—(1) The Secretaries of the military departments shall each develop and implement a strategy to disseminate among appropriate personnel of the military departments authorities and best practices for the recruitment of medical and health professionals, including the authorities under subsection (a).~~

~~(2) Each strategy under paragraph (1) shall—~~

~~(A) assess current recruitment policies, procedures, and practices of the military department concerned to assure that such strategy facilitates the implementation of~~

~~efficiencies which reduce the time required to fill vacant positions for medical and health professionals; and~~

~~(B) clearly identify processes and actions that will be used to inform and educate military and civilian personnel responsible for the recruitment of medical and health professionals.~~

~~(c)~~ (b) TERMINATION OF AUTHORITY—(1) The authority of the Secretary of Defense under subsection (a)(1) to exercise authorities available under chapter 74 of title 38 for purposes of the recruitment, employment, and retention of civilian health care professionals for the Department of Defense expires December 31, ~~2015~~2020.

(2) The Secretary may not appoint a person to a position of employment under subsection (a)(2) after December 31, ~~2015~~2020.

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