



**CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE
COST ESTIMATE**

September 23, 2016

**H.R. 5162
Vet Connect Act of 2016**

*As ordered reported by the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs
on September 21, 2016*

H.R. 5162 would authorize the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to disclose certain medical information to nondepartment entities that provide hospital care or medical treatment to veterans who are enrolled in VA's healthcare system. Under current law, VA cannot release information related to certain medical issues, such as drug abuse, without a signed authorization from the patient.

This bill would permit such disclosure for treatment purposes without having to first obtain written authorization from the patient. If enacted, VA would revise its policies; however, this proposal would not require any modifications to the electronic patient record system. As a result, CBO estimates that implementing this bill would have insignificant costs over the 2017-2021 period; any spending would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

Enacting the legislation would not affect direct spending or revenues; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures do not apply.

CBO estimates that enacting H.R. 5162 would not increase net direct spending or on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2027.

H.R. 5162 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Ann E. Futrell. The estimate was approved by H. Samuel Papenfuss, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.