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(Original Signature of Member)

118TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

**H. R.** \_\_\_\_\_

To amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to establish programs for the provision of mental health services to individuals affected by a major disaster, and for other purposes.

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IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Ms. BALINT introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**A BILL**

To amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to establish programs for the provision of mental health services to individuals affected by a major disaster, 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 “Mental Health Emer-  
5 gency Needs in Disasters Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. ASSISTANCE FOR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**  
2 **AFTER MAJOR DISASTER.**

3 Title IV of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and  
4 Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5170 et seq.) is  
5 amended by adding at the end the following:

6 **“SEC. 431. MOBILE MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS SERVICES.**

7 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The President, acting through  
8 the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management  
9 Agency, is authorized to provide mental and behavioral  
10 health counseling services to victims of a major disaster  
11 in order to relieve mental health problems caused or ag-  
12 gravated by such major disaster or the aftermath of such  
13 disaster.

14 “(b) TYPE OF ASSISTANCE.—The provision of behav-  
15 ioral counseling services under this section shall be pro-  
16 vided through mobile mental health crisis units and such  
17 units shall—

18 “(1) be deployed to counties located in the area  
19 affected by a major disaster for not more than 2  
20 years after the date on which the President declared  
21 such major disaster;

22 “(2) be staffed by individuals who—

23 “(A) are employees of the Federal Emer-  
24 gency Management Agency;

25 “(B) are appropriately trained to—

1                   “(i) address the effects of major dis-  
2                   asters on communities and individuals with  
3                   socioeconomically disadvantaged back-  
4                   grounds; and

5                   “(ii) provide culturally appropriate  
6                   care;

7                   “(C) are professionally trained and appro-  
8                   priately licensed to provide evidence-based care,  
9                   such as psychological first aid, crisis counseling,  
10                  sudden death counseling, and counseling to in-  
11                  dividuals with post-traumatic stress disorder;  
12                  and

13                  “(D) to the extent practicable, have experi-  
14                  ence providing mental health services in the  
15                  area affected by the major disaster; and

16                  “(3) disperse information about resources, other  
17                  preventive materials, and available peer supports.

18                  “(c) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—In carrying out this  
19                  section, the Administrator may consult with and receive  
20                  technical assistance or training from the Director of the  
21                  Center for Mental Health Services of the Substance Abuse  
22                  and Mental Health Services Administration.

23                  “(d) TIMING.—The Administrator shall ensure that  
24                  mobile mental health crisis units described in subsection  
25                  (b) are deployed immediately following a major disaster.

1 **“SEC. 432. MENTAL HEALTH DISASTER GRANTS.**

2 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The President, acting through  
3 the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management  
4 Agency, is authorized to provide grants to a State or In-  
5 dian tribal government for the purpose of providing behav-  
6 ioral health treatment, including screening and diagnosis,  
7 crisis counseling, other related crisis helplines, or other  
8 service-delivery programs to individuals affected by a  
9 major disaster.

10 “(b) ELIGIBILITY.—A State or Indian tribal govern-  
11 ment may only receive a grant under this section during  
12 the 2-year period beginning on the date on which the  
13 President declares the major disaster for which the State  
14 or Indian tribal government applies for such grant.

15 “(c) APPLICATION.—Any State or Indian tribal gov-  
16 ernment seeking a grant under this section shall submit  
17 to the Administrator an application containing materials  
18 describing any mental health services available to individ-  
19 uals in the jurisdiction of the State or Indian tribal gov-  
20 ernment, including an initial needs assessment describing  
21 unmet mental health service needs, and critical gaps in  
22 mental and substance use disorder prevention, treatment,  
23 and recovery support service systems.

24 “(d) PRIORITIZATION.—In providing grants under  
25 this section, the Administrator shall prioritize awarding  
26 grants to States or Indian tribal governments with juris-

1 diction over areas that have high unmet needs for mental  
2 health services.

3 “(e) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—In carrying out this  
4 section, the Administrator may consult with and receive  
5 technical assistance or training from the Director of the  
6 Center for Mental Health Services of the Substance Abuse  
7 and Mental Health Services Administration.

8 “(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There  
9 is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section  
10 \$44,000,000 for each fiscal year.”.

11 **SEC. 3. RESEARCH ON MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE**  
12 **USE DISORDERS AFTER MAJOR DISASTER.**

13 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator of the Federal  
14 Emergency Management Agency shall establish a research  
15 program on the effects of major disasters (as such term  
16 is defined in section 102 of the Robert T. Stafford Dis-  
17 aster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C.  
18 5122)) on incidences and severity of mental health dis-  
19 orders, substance use disorders, and alcohol use disorders,  
20 including the incidence and severity of such disorders  
21 across cultural, racial, and socioeconomic groups.

22 (b) REQUIREMENTS.—The program established  
23 under subsection (a) shall include research on—

1           (1) efficacy of assistance provided under the  
2       Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency  
3       Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.);

4           (2) the various long-term behavioral health ef-  
5       fects on adults and children caused by specific types  
6       of major disasters; and

7           (3) any other subject that the Administrator  
8       determines is necessary.