

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. _____

To establish a grant program for the purpose of public health data system modernization.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. KAINE (for himself, Mr. ISAKSON, and Mr. KING) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on

A BILL

To establish a grant program for the purpose of public health data system modernization.

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 “Saving Lives Through
5 Better Data Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. PUBLIC HEALTH DATA SYSTEM MODERNIZATION.**

7 Subtitle C of title XXVIII of the Public Health Serv-
8 ice Act (42 U.S.C. 300hh–31 et seq.) is amended by add-
9 ing at the end the following:

1 **“SEC. 2822. PUBLIC HEALTH DATA SYSTEM MODERNIZA-**
2 **TION GRANTS.**

3 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, acting through
4 the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Pre-
5 vention, shall—

6 “(1) award grants to State, local, Tribal, and
7 territorial public health departments for the expan-
8 sion and modernization of public health data sys-
9 tems, to assist public health departments in—

10 “(A) improving secure public health data
11 collection, transmission, exchange, maintenance,
12 and analysis;

13 “(B) simplifying reporting by health care
14 providers, as applicable, pursuant to State law,
15 including through the use of health information
16 technology, to State, local, Tribal, and terri-
17 torial public health departments, including pub-
18 lic health officials in multiple jurisdictions with-
19 in such State, as appropriate;

20 “(C) enhancing interoperability of current
21 public health data systems with health informa-
22 tion technology, including certified health infor-
23 mation technology;

24 “(D) supporting earlier disease and health
25 condition detection for public health responses;
26 and

1 “(E) supporting activities within the appli-
2 cable jurisdiction related to the expansion and
3 modernization of electronic case reporting;

4 “(2) conduct activities related to the interoper-
5 ability and improvement of applicable public health
6 data systems used by the Centers for Disease Con-
7 trol and Prevention, as appropriate; and

8 “(3) develop and utilize public-private partner-
9 ships for technical assistance and related implemen-
10 tation support for State, local, Tribal, and territorial
11 public health departments, and the Centers for Dis-
12 ease Control and Prevention, on the expansion and
13 modernization of electronic case reporting and public
14 health data systems, as applicable.

15 “(b) REQUIREMENTS.—

16 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may not
17 award a grant under subsection (a)(1) unless the ap-
18 plicant supports standards endorsed by the National
19 Coordinator for Health Information Technology pur-
20 suant to section 3001(c)(1) or adopted by the Sec-
21 retary under section 3004.

22 “(2) WAIVER.—The Secretary may waive the
23 requirement under paragraph (1) with respect to an
24 applicant if the Secretary determines that the activi-

1 ties under subsection (a) cannot otherwise be carried
2 out within the applicable jurisdiction.

3 “(c) USE OF FUNDS.—An entity receiving a grant
4 under this section may use amounts received under such
5 grant for one or both of the following:

6 “(1) Carrying out activities described in sub-
7 section (a)(1) to support public health data systems
8 (including electronic case reporting), which may in-
9 clude support for, and training of, professionals with
10 expertise in contributing to and using such systems.

11 “(2) Developing and disseminating information
12 related to the use and importance of public health
13 data.

14 “(d) STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.—Not
15 later than 180 days after the date of enactment of the
16 Saving Lives Through Better Data Act, the Secretary,
17 acting through the Director of the Centers for Disease
18 Control and Prevention, shall submit to the Committee on
19 Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate and
20 the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House
21 of Representatives, a coordinated strategy and an accom-
22 panying implementation plan that identifies and dem-
23 onstrates the steps the Secretary will carry out to—

1 “(1) update and improve applicable public
2 health data systems used by the Centers for Disease
3 Control and Prevention; and

4 “(2) carry out the activities described in this
5 section to support the improvement of State, local,
6 Tribal, and territorial public health data systems.

7 “(e) CONSULTATION.—The Secretary, acting through
8 the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Pre-
9 vention, shall consult with States, local, Tribal, and terri-
10 torial health departments, professional medical and public
11 health associations, health information technology experts,
12 and other appropriate entities regarding the plan and
13 grant program to modernize public health data systems
14 pursuant to this section. Such activities may include the
15 provision of technical assistance related to the exchange
16 of information by such public health data systems used
17 by relevant health care and public health entities at the
18 local, State, Federal, Tribal, and territorial levels.

19 “(f) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than one
20 year after the date of enactment of this section, the Sec-
21 retary shall submit a report to the Committee on Health,
22 Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate and the
23 Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of
24 Representatives that includes—

25 “(1) a description of any barriers to—

1 “(A) public health authorities imple-
2 menting electronic case reporting and interoper-
3 able public health data systems; or

4 “(B) the exchange of information pursuant
5 to electronic case reporting;

6 “(2) an assessment of the potential public
7 health impact of implementing electronic case re-
8 porting and interoperable public health data sys-
9 tems; and

10 “(3) a description of the activities carried out
11 pursuant to this section.

12 “(g) ELECTRONIC CASE REPORTING.—In this sec-
13 tion, the term ‘electronic case reporting’ means the auto-
14 mated identification, generation, and bilateral exchange of
15 reports of health events among electronic health record or
16 health information technology systems and public health
17 authorities.

18 “(h) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—For the
19 purpose of carrying out this section, there are authorized
20 to be appropriated \$100,000,000 for each of fiscal years
21 2020 through 2024.”.