

**Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs*
Association of VA Psychologist Leaders*
Fighting for Veterans Healthcare
Association of VA Social Workers***

August 28, 2017

* An independent organization, not representing the Department of Veterans Affairs

What we support and stand for in Veterans Choice Program renewal legislation:

1. VHA must be the first point of access and coordinator of care.
2. Community care is used only in situations where it supplements services not readily available within local VHA.
3. All VHA facilities are assured of sufficient staff, space, IT and financial resources to provide comprehensive, high quality care.
4. Special efforts are made to permanently fund and fill vacancies in VHA facilities where wait lists exist due to demand outstripping capacity.
5. There are sufficient IT resources and technical support to ensure that home telehealth is available to rural veterans.
6. Choice providers must meet VHA's high standards, use evidence-based treatments driven by measurement-based care, have knowledge of military culture and competence in veteran-specific problems, perform needed screenings and be subject to the same continuing education requirements as VHA providers.
7. Community providers and VA employees receive mandatory training to improve coordination of care provided to veterans.
8. Choice providers' performance, timeliness of the provision of inpatient and ambulatory services, and promptness of providing medical documents are measured and publicly reported using the same metrics as VHA providers.
9. All VHA employees receive market rate salaries, and strong incentives are offered to encourage hiring in rural areas.
10. Congressional budgeting processes and plans for construction and renovation allow for future projections of utilization.