

## **From the Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert Wilkie, to all of our Veterans and supporters across the country, a note explaining the Mission Act.**

### **Bringing Bipartisan Reform to Veterans**



Imagine if Republicans and Democrats worked together to pass reforms that improve the lives of millions of people.

And imagine if those reforms put America's Veterans at the center of their healthcare decisions, leading to better customer service for our Nation's heroes.

This isn't hypothetical. It happened last year when Congress passed the [MISSION Act](#).

Through state-of-the-art facilities, cutting-edge technology, and increased clinician recruiting and retention incentives, VA continues to enhance its coordinated care system through high-quality VA health

care and community care provider networks.

The legislation sailed through Congress with overwhelming bipartisan support and the strong backing of Veterans' service organizations.

President Donald J. Trump's signature put us on a path to implementing these reforms. On June 6, the MISSION Act will enable VA to consolidate the Department's community care efforts into a single, simple-to-use program that will empower Veterans with the ability to choose the healthcare providers they trust.

So what can Veterans expect on June 6?

Less red tape, more satisfaction and predictability for patients, more efficiency for our clinicians, and better value for taxpayers.

Veterans will be eligible to get community care for a variety of reasons, including when VA can't provide the treatment they need or when care outside our system is in the best medical interest of the patient.

We listened to Veterans and heard they preferred standards based on drive times rather than driving mileage because those standards better reflect Veteran experiences, especially in large urban areas with lots of traffic.

To ensure our Veterans are spending their time getting care instead of driving to it, patients facing an average drive time of 30-minutes or more for VA primary or mental healthcare, or non-institutional extended care services, will have the option of choosing a community provider closer to home. For specialty care, the drive-time standard will be an average of 60 minutes.

And to get Veterans the care they need when they need it, VA patients facing a 20-day or more wait time for primary or mental healthcare, or non-institutional extended care services, will have the option of choosing a community provider who can deliver that care faster. For specialty care, the wait-time standard will be 28 days.

For additional convenience and timely treatment, eligible Veterans will also have access to urgent, walk-in care that gives them the choice to receive certain services at participating community clinics in their communities. (To access this new benefit, Veterans will select a provider in VA's community care network and may be charged a copayment.)

Veterans will be encouraged to ask VA about these new options, and well-trained staff will be available to help them quickly understand their choices.

These exciting and important changes speak to my top priority – delivering the best medical customer service and offering Veterans more healthcare choices.

While we still have more work to do, the VA is making progress.

We are seeing more patients than ever before, more quickly than ever before and studies show VA now compares favorably to the private sector for [access](#) and [quality of care](#) – and [in many cases exceeds it](#).

And Veterans have noticed.

Patients' trust in VA care has skyrocketed to 87.7 percent, and in the last fiscal year VA completed more than 58 million internal appointments – a record high and 623,000 more than the year before.

VA employees are noticing improvements as well. VA ranked [sixth out of 17](#) Federal Government agencies in the Partnership for Public Service's most recent "Best Places to Work" survey, up from 17th the year prior.

To maintain the trust of our Veterans, we must continue to deliver. And we will constantly innovate, upgrade, and pursue ways to better serve our Nation's heroes.

The MISSION Act is a vital part of this effort, giving VA the ability to implement the best practices we've learned in our nearly 75 years of experience offering community care.

The core of the doctor-patient relationship is trust. President Trump promised Veterans that this core value would shape the VA.

With the MISSION Act, the future of the VA healthcare system will lie in the hands of Veterans – precisely where it should be.

That's exactly what President Trump promised, it's exactly what Congress voted for, and it's exactly what VA will deliver to America's Veterans.

We will provide more information and progress updates over the next several weeks.

**For more information on the Mission Act, and what this will do for all Veterans, please go to [www.MISSIONAct.va.gov](http://www.MISSIONAct.va.gov)**

Your support and health are our mission. Thank you for choosing VA.

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## Not sure where to start with VA?



Whether you're just getting out of the service or you've been a civilian for years now, the [VA Welcome Kit](#) can help guide you to the benefits and services you've earned. Step-by-step instructions on how to enroll in VA health care, apply for a disability rating, education benefits, memorials, and more.

[Download the VA Welcome Kit](#)

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