

GUARANTEE THE CARE AND SERVICES PROMISED TO OUR VETERANS



The Veterans' True Choice Act

Expanding the health care options we give to our veterans is key to meeting the changing needs of today's and tomorrow's servicemembers. Concerned Veterans for America supports H.R. 214, the Veterans True Choice Act, which would allow disabled veterans to choose whether to enroll in the VA or TRICARE system.

THE ISSUE

While the VA MISSION Act significantly expanded health care choices for millions of veterans through the Veterans Community Care Program and its new access standards, veterans still do not have the same options as most Americans regarding where and when they access care.

Unfortunately, the VA has extensively undermined veterans' access to community care since the COVID-19 pandemic. The agency shut down the Office of Community Care, does not tell veterans about their community care eligibility during scheduling, manipulates wait times to deny access to non-VA care, has allowed administrators to overrule clinicians' recommendations for veterans to seek community care, and even directs schedulers to dissuade veterans from using community care when they ask for it. This approach traps veterans in a broken system plagued by unacceptable wait times and regularly delayed and denied care.

Veterans, not VA administrators, should be able to decide which providers best meet their needs. Veterans' health benefits should allow those who served our country to choose accordingly.

POLICY SOLUTION

H.R. 214, the Veterans True Choice Act, by Rep. Greg Steube, will give service-connected disabled veterans in priority groups I-III the option to enroll in TRICARE Select or TRICARE for Life if they are Medicare eligible instead of participating in the VA health care system. It directs the VA to reimburse the DoD accordingly for the cost of care.

Compared to VA care, the TRICARE system already enjoys a better reputation among our active duty servicemembers and military retirees because it allows its patients far greater individual choice to seek providers in their communities or in the military health system that best meet their treatment needs.

Empowering service-connected disabled veterans with the simple, straightforward choice to make decisions that best meet their individual health care needs through wider coverage choices is a clear solution to meet the changing needs of today's and tomorrow's veterans. As the VA assumes new coverage obligations for millions of veterans under the PACT Act, policymakers should be expanding the choices available to veterans. The Veterans True Choice Act is a great step towards extending our veterans the flexibility and treatment access in their health care benefits that most Americans take for granted.

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