



EMPOWER VETERANS WITH ACCESS TO QUALITY AND TIMELY HEALTH CARE

# Protect and Expand Veterans' Health Care Choices

**America's veterans have earned access to timely and quality health care. Our nation best honors this promise by empowering veterans with the freedom to seek care at the providers that best meet their needs. Empowering veterans to choose their provider can be a model for better health care for all Americans.**

## THE ISSUE

The Department of Veterans Affairs has historically been too focused on its own bureaucratic interests over the well-being of the veterans it was created to serve. Millions of veterans received life-changing new care choices under the VA MISSION Act, but the VA bureaucracy and prior leadership undermined the law through contradictory agency guidance.<sup>1</sup>

## POLICY SOLUTIONS

### FULL HEALTH CARE CHOICE

The most important way to protect and expand veterans' health care choices is to stop letting the VA interfere with when veterans can exercise them. Under "full choice," veterans would be able to use their health benefits at VA facilities or community care providers without VA preapproval.

### CODIFY COMMUNITY CARE ACCESS STANDARDS

Until full choice is a reality, veterans need certainty about their existing treatment options. Congress should codify community care access standards into law, preventing future VA leadership from reducing access to these options without congressional approval.

### DATA-DRIVEN MODERNIZATION

The average VA facility is over 60 years old. Congress should support a comprehensive, data-driven modernization process that preserves existing access to care while ensuring that limited VA resources are spent as in line with veterans' needs as possible. The VA Asset and Infrastructure Review Commission, originally created by the VA MISSION Act, offers the best model for a data-driven overhaul. Congress should revive and clarify its mandate.

### LOWER COSTS BY EMPOWERING PATIENTS

Millions of veterans and civilians benefit from health savings accounts, which allow Americans to pay for out-of-pocket medical expenses with tax-advantaged dollars, reducing costs and empowering patients. Only 10–20% of Americans can currently open an HSA. Congress should empower patients by expanding eligibility further.

### EQUAL PAYMENT FOR THE SAME CARE

Flawed Medicare reimbursement policies currently pay physician practices and other outpatient facilities more for the same care when they merge with hospitals. This practice limits competition and drives up costs. Site-neutral payment reform would improve access to affordable care for veterans using community care options and civilians alike.

## CONTACT

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## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> See: “Delayed and Denied Care,” Concerned Veterans for America, 2022; [“Records Confirm VA’s Use of Inaccurate Wait Time Numbers,”](#) Americans for Prosperity Foundation, October 1, 2021; [“More Evidence the VA is Improperly Delaying or Denying Community Care to Eligible Veterans,”](#) Americans for Prosperity Foundation, January 28, 2022; [“Empower Oversight Obtains VA Red Team Report on Community Care,”](#) Empower Oversight, April 30, 2024.