

VA MISSION Act of 2018

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the VA MISSION of 2018 Act?

The VA MISSION Act of 2018 strengthens VA's ability to deliver health care to Veterans where and when they need it. The legislation was signed into law by the President on June 6, 2018.

2. Is the MISSION Act privatizing Veterans' health care?

No. The MISSION Act supports the creation of an integrated VA health care system that will:

- Ensure easy and reliable access to care that Veterans need when they need it.
- Provide exceptional care to Veterans anytime, anywhere.
- Serve as a trusted, caring partner, helping Veterans and their families be healthy and well.

3. Where can I find the text of the MISSION Act?

You can read the MISSION Act online here:

<https://www.congress.gov/115/bills/s2372/BILLS-115s2372enr.pdf>

4. What are the immediate impacts to Veterans for community care due to the MISSION Act?

There will be no immediate changes for community providers as a result of the VA MISSION Act of 2018. Community providers can expect continuity of operations due to the appropriation of \$5.2 billion in mandatory funding for the Veterans Choice Fund while VA works to implement the new Veterans Community Care Program. For detailed information on accessing community care, please visit: <https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/index.asp>

5. Why will it take so long for VA to implement changes to its community care programs?

Due to the significant complexity associated with health care delivery, the large size of the VA health care system, along with VA's network of more than half a million community providers, adequate time and consideration is required to properly develop the required regulations and necessary system changes and training for successfully implementing the consolidated community care program.

A lesson learned from the implementation of the Veterans Choice Program is that rushing implementation wasted resources and did not serve Veterans, providers, or VA well. VA reached an agreement with TriWest Health Care Alliance for a one-year extension of its current coverage of the Patient-Centered Community Care (PC3) and Veterans Choice Program (VCP). For additional information, visit <https://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=5117>

6. How will the new Community Care Program work?

VA's current patchwork of seven separate community care programs is a bureaucratic maze that is difficult for Veterans, their families, and VA employees to navigate. The MISSION Act will consolidate VA's [community care](#) programs, including Veterans Choice, into a new program that is easier to navigate for Veterans and their families, community providers, and VA employees. As part of this process, VA is establishing access standards and standards for quality that will apply to VA facilities and community providers. The proposed access standards were [announced](#) January 30. They are based on analysis of best practices in government and the private sector and tailored to the needs of Veterans. Veterans who access community care can expect a familiar process with several improvements through a new urgent care benefit, expanded eligibility criteria, and improved quality of care. Community providers can expect their interaction with VA will get easier with new IT systems, better communications, and more timely payments.

7. How is the VA MISSION Act of 2018 meeting the increasing demand for more quality health care professionals?

VA is focused on recruitment to ensure Veterans are receiving the care they have earned. This Act will allow for additional, improved recruitment efforts, including a new scholarship program, greater access to VA's education debt-reduction program and improved flexibility for providing bonuses for recruitment, relocation and retention. Additional information regarding careers at VA can be found at <https://www.vacareers.va.gov/>

8. How does the VA MISSION Act of 2018 impact the VA Caregiver program?

The Act expands eligibility for VA's Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers by including eligible Veterans from all eras of service. Expansion will occur in two phases, starting with those who were injured on or before May 7, 1975, with further expansion beginning two years later. For detailed information on the VA Caregiver program, visit <https://www.caregiver.va.gov/index.asp>