

# VA MISSION Act

## An Overview of Key Elements



### What is the MISSION Act?

The VA Maintaining Internal Systems and Strengthening Integrated Outside Networks (MISSION) Act of 2018 was signed into law by the president on June 6, 2018. The Act will fundamentally transform VA's health care system, fulfill the president's commitment to provide Veterans with more choice in their health care providers and prevent a funding shortfall in the current Veterans Choice Program. The Act includes four main pillars:

1. Consolidating VA's community care programs.
2. Expanding the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers to eligible Veterans of all eras.
3. Providing VA the necessary flexibility to align its infrastructure footprint with the needs of our nation's Veterans.
4. Strengthening VA's ability to recruit and retain quality health care professionals.



### What is it NOT?

The MISSION Act is not a step toward privatization. It's about significantly improving Veterans' experience and enhancing their access to care.



### Key Elements

**Community Care** - The Act consolidates VA's multiple community care programs, including the Veterans Choice Program, into a new Veterans community care program, which is easier to navigate, for Veterans and their families, community providers and VA employees.

**Caregivers Program** - The Act expands eligibility for VA's Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) by including eligible Veterans from all eras of service. Post-9/11 Veterans have benefited greatly from PCAFC. 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. The expansion timeline is still under development.

**Asset and Infrastructure** - The Asset and Infrastructure Review (AIR) process in the Act will provide VA the necessary flexibility to align its infrastructure footprint with the needs of the nation's Veterans.

**Recruit and Retain** - 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.

**Information Sharing** - For the purpose of providing health care or other health care related functions, the Act allows VA to share patient information that would otherwise be protected. It also allows for disclosing this information for purposes of recovering or collecting reasonable charges for care furnished to, or paid on behalf of, a Veteran in connection with a nonservice-connected disability.

# Caring for Veterans

## Subtitle A – Developing an Integrated High-Performing Network

### Chapter 1: Community Care Programs

(Sections 101-109)

- Establishment of a new Veterans Community Care Program
- Authorization of Veterans Care Agreements between VA and non-VA providers
- Agreements with state Veterans homes
- Access to walk-in care
- Remediation of VA medical service lines
- Market assessments and strategic plans

### Chapter 4: Other Matters – Non-VA Providers

(Sections 131-134)

- Safe opioid prescribing practices by non-VA providers
- Improved information sharing with community providers
- Establishing competency standards for non-VA providers
- Enhanced authority for VA providers' access to prescription drug monitoring programs

## Other Matters

(Sections 501-512)

- Personnel reporting and transparency
- Role of podiatrists in VA
- Definition of major medical facility projects
- Authorization of major medical facility projects in Livermore, California
- Peer specialists in Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) settings
- VA medical scribe pilot program

### Chapter 2: Paying Providers & Improving Collections

(Sections 111-114)

- Prompt payment to providers
- Improved authority to pay for authorized care
- Improved collections authority for non-service connected disabilities

### Chapter 5: Other Non-VA Health Related Matters

(Sections 141-144)

- Plans for requests for supplemental appropriations
- Veterans Choice Fund flexibility for non-Choice community care
- Sunset of Veterans Choice Program

### Chapter 3: Education & Training Programs

(Sections 121-123)

- Education program for Veterans on health care options
- Training program for VA and contract staff on administration of non-VA health care
- Continuing medical education for non-VA medical professionals

## Subtitle B – Telehealth, Care and Payment, Live Organ Donors

(Sections 151-153)

- Licensure of VA health care professionals providing treatment via telemedicine
- Authority of VA Center for Innovation for Care and Payment
- Authority to provide for operations on live donors for purposes of conducting transplant procedures for Veterans

## Subtitle C – Caregivers

(Sections 161-163)

- Expansion of VA Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers
- IT system to assess and improve the family caregivers program

## Asset and Infrastructure Review Act

(Sections 201-213)

- Establish the Asset and Infrastructure Review (AIR) Commission to modernize or realign VHA facilities
- Improve training of construction personnel
- Review of enhanced use leases
- Assess health care in Pacific territories

## Improvements to Recruitment of Health Care Professionals

(Sections 301-306)

- Designated scholarships for VA physicians and dentists
- Increased student loan repayment thresholds and authority
- VA Specialty Education Loan Repayment program
- Veterans Healing Veterans Scholarship Program
- Greater flexibility for recruitment, relocation and retention incentives

## Health Care in Underserved Areas

(Sections 401-403)

- Development of criteria for designation of underserved VA facilities
- Pilot program for mobile deployment teams to underserved facilities
- Pilot program on graduate medical education and residency

