

VA**U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs**

News Release

Office of Public Affairs
Media RelationsWashington, DC 20420
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April 24, 2015**VA Expands Choice Program Eligibility, Effective Immediately***VA Will Now Determine Eligibility Using Driving Distance*

WASHINGTON – In order to expand eligibility for the Veterans Choice Program, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) today announced that it will determine eligibility for the Veterans Choice Program based on the distance between a Veteran's place of residence and the nearest VA medical facility using driving distance rather than straight-line distance. This change has been published in the [Federal Register](#) and is effective immediately.

"VA is pleased to announce the distance calculation change from straight-line to driving distance for the Veterans Choice Program," said Secretary Robert McDonald. "This update to the program will allow more Veterans to access care when and where they want it. We look forward to continued dialogue with Veterans and our partners to help us ensure continued improvements for Veterans' to access care."

The change from straight-line to driving distance roughly doubles the number of eligible Veterans. Letters are being sent to the newly eligible Veterans to let them know they are now eligible for the Veterans Choice Program under this expansion. If a Veteran does not remember receiving a Veterans Choice Card or has other questions about the Choice Program, they can call (866) 606-8198.

Effective immediately, VA is also changing the mileage calculation for beneficiary travel. The change will ensure consistency in VA's mileage calculations across the two programs. The beneficiary travel calculation will now be made using the fastest route instead of the shortest route.

For more details about the department's progress and related information, see www.va.gov/opa/choiceact/factsheets_and_details.asp.

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