Driving toward a program that is easy to understand, simple to administer, and meets the needs of Veterans and their families, community providers, and VA staff

Enacted April 19, 2017, a new law made 3 key changes to help improve the Veterans Choice Program:

1. **Removal of Sunset Date**
   - The law removed the August 7, 2017 date for the VCP. The VCP will continue until the funds appropriated by Congress are completely expended.

2. **Primary Coordinator of Benefits Designation**
   - VA is now Primary Coordinator of Benefits for services provided to Veterans under the VCP. This change eliminates costly time consuming manual processes and more closely aligns the VCP with other VA programs.

3. **Information Sharing**
   - The law removes barriers to sharing Veteran’s health information with community providers while ensuring community providers only use that information to provide care.

5. **Immediate Legislative Needs**
   - While we are excited about the recent legislative changes, we know that more needs to be done. VA can not streamline care and improve the Veterans Choice Program without help from Congress.

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**Consolidation and Redesign of Community Care**
- VA has multiple programs to send Veterans out into the community to receive care.
- **Solution:** Consolidate and streamline the multiple community care programs into one program.
- **Impact:** Eligibility and access is easily understood by Veterans and their families, community providers, and VA staff.

**Enhanced Sharing of Patient Information**
- Restrictions prevent VA from sharing critical health information with Veterans’ other health insurance.
- **Solution:** Further revisions to the law by removing barriers to information sharing for all types of health services provided.
- **Impact:** Enhances VA’s ability to coordinate care.

**Obligation of Funding**
- Obligating funding at the time of authorization leads to inaccurate accounting.
- **Solution:** Obligation of funding at the time of payment.
- **Impact:** Improved accounting of community care funds.

**Provider Agreement**
- Contracts create unnecessary administrative burdens for some community providers.
- **Solution:** Provider Agreements.
- **Impact:** A larger provider network that would increase access to care for Veterans.

**Funding and Funding Flexibility**
- VA Community Care is subject to unnecessary funding constraints.
- **Solution:** Funding for VA Community Care and flexibility to meet the needs of Veterans.
- **Impact:** Ensuring eligible Veterans can access community care and increase funding transparency.