



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# News Release

Office of Public Affairs  
Media Relations

Washington, DC 20420  
(202) 461-7600  
[www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Nov. 21, 2014

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
November 21, 2014

## **VA to Accept Proposals for New Scheduling System**

*New system will replace 30-year-old legacy scheduling system*

WASHINGTON – As part of The Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) ongoing effort to improve Veterans' access to healthcare, VA announced it has issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a new Medical Appointment Scheduling System (MASS). The new MASS technology will help improve access to care for Veterans by providing schedulers with state-of-the-art, management-based scheduling software.

"When it comes to the care of our Veterans, we want the best technology the American marketplace can provide," said VA Secretary Robert McDonald. "A new and innovative scheduling system is an essential tool we must have in place to enable us to provide our Veterans with timely and high quality health care."

The new system will replace a legacy scheduling system that has been in use at VA since 1985. VA's acquisition approach for the new scheduling solution remains full and open; any qualified vendor may compete. Potential bidders are not required to have prior experience working with VA. Proposals are due on January 9, 2015.

VA released a draft "Performance Work Statement" to maximize industry and stakeholder input. The feedback received from industry has been used to refine the requirements included in the final RFP.

"We are seeking vendors who will work closely with us and can meet our timeline," said VA Chief Information Officer Stephen Warren. "We are dedicated to finding the right partner to help us create and implement our modern scheduling system."

The RFP requires industry to demonstrate technical capabilities via two methods; submission of a written proposal and participation in a structured product demonstration to evaluators (which include VA scheduling staff). VA expects to award the contract by the spring of 2015. The selected bidder will be tasked to provide a system that focuses on an achievable schedule to deliver core capabilities to all VA medical facilities within the first two years of the contract. Remaining capabilities will be implemented nationally in a series of incremental enhancements throughout the contract period of performance. In addition to industry and stakeholder engagement, VA officials also worked with Veteran Service Organizations and the Northern Virginia Technology Council to better understand the needs of Veterans and incorporated the group's feedback in the design of the RFP.

### **To improve services to Veterans, VA also made several near-term modifications to its current system:**

- VA awarded a contract to improve the existing scheduling interface, providing schedulers with a calendar view of resources in lieu of the current text-based, multiple-screen view. The update is scheduled to begin rollout January 2015
- VA is developing mobile applications allowing Veterans to directly request certain types of primary care and mental health appointments (scheduled to begin deployment December 2014)
- VA rolled out new clinical [video telehealth capabilities in 2014](#) providing service to more than 690,000 Veterans.

### **Other accomplishments of note to improve Veterans access to care include:**

- Implementation of the Choice Program: a new, temporary benefit that allows qualifying Veterans to receive health care in their communities rather than waiting for a VA appointment or traveling to a VA facility: The first round of cards was issued on November 5; the second round of cards was issued on November 17 to Veterans waiting more than 30 days from their preferred date or in cases considered medically necessary by the Veterans' physician
- Scheduling more than 1.2 million more appointments in the past four months than in the same period last year. In total, VA medical centers have scheduled over 19 million Veteran appointments from June to October 1, 2014
- Reducing the national new patient Primary Care wait time by 18 percent
- Completing 98 percent of appointments within 30 days of the Veterans' preferred date, or the date determined to be medically necessary by a physician
- Authorizing 1.1 million non-VA care authorizations, a 47-percent increase over the same period last year
- Increasing the amount of time providers can deliver care to Veterans by increasing the amount of clinic hours and adding weekend and evening clinics at VA medical centers.

Information about the RFP may be found at <http://go.usa.gov/sVDP>. The RFP number is VA118-15-R-0715.

###