

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

News Release

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VA statement about Office of Inspector General review of implementation of the Veterans Choice Program

VA appreciates the Office of Inspector General (OIG) review of VA's implementation of the Veterans Choice Program (VCP). The OIG report reviewed the VCP from its inception, over two years ago, in November of 2014 through September of 2015. Overall, the Department concurs with the findings in the report. However, VCP is no longer the program it was when it rolled out. The Department has made significant improvements since the inception of the program. VA did not wait for the OIG report to publish before taking critical steps towards improving the program, including working with Congress to amend the law four times to increase Veterans access and satisfaction with VCP, including increasing the provider base, increasing the number of scheduled appointments, and implementing numerous process changes for both VA and our contract partners.

VA is moving in the right direction, towards an integrated healthcare network that improves Veterans' healthcare experience by delivering the best of VA and the community. From fiscal year 2015 to fiscal year 2016, total community care authorizations increased by 25%. Over the same period, the VCP network of providers grew 67% to over 360,000 providers and facilities contracted. We are committed to deliver a program that meets the needs of Veterans and community providers while being good stewards of taxpayer dollars.

Even with the improvements, we recognize more work needs to be done. VA will continue working with Congress and all of our stakeholders and partners to deliver a community care program that meets the needs of Veterans and their families.

VCP continues to expand timely access to care for Veterans. Over 6 million VCP appointments have been completed since VCP's inception. VA can't make all the necessary changes to the VCP alone. We need Congress to act on our proposed Plan to Consolidate Community Care so we can continue to build on the progress we have made.