

**VA**



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# News Release

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## **Statement by Acting VA Secretary Robert Wilkie**

### **Congress Must Pass Choice Bill Now to Give Best Care Options to our Veterans**

Today marks four years since the disastrous wait-time scandal in Phoenix came to light, where long wait times at the Phoenix VA and at other department facilities nationwide led to unconscionable delays in receiving care.

Following that scandal, Congress passed the bipartisan VA Choice legislation that allowed Veterans to seek care in the private sector when faced with VA wait times of over 30 days, or when Veterans had to travel more than 40 miles to see a VA doctor.

Funding for the Choice program was set to expire last year, but Congress extended it twice while it worked on a bipartisan deal for the next generation of Choice legislation that would give even better options for Veterans to seek care in the community when the VA was unable to provide them the best standard of treatment.

It's time to fix the Choice Program – as well as the department's other non-VA care efforts – once and for all by merging them into a single, streamlined community care program that's easy to use for Veterans and VA employees.

America's Veterans are looking to Congress and VA to come together now to provide them the best possible solutions for their care. Your VA will be working overtime to achieve the promise of leaving no veteran waiting for care.