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# News Release

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## VA Debt Management Center reduces average wait times for Veterans contacting call center

**WASHINGTON** — The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) [Debt Management Center \(DMC\)](#) reached a recent milestone this July when it reported it had lowered the average wait times for Veterans contacting the call center, from over 21 minutes in fiscal year (FY) 2016 to under five minutes during FY 2018.

"The team at the DMC has enhanced services to our Veterans," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "It's our mission to take care of our Veterans, no matter what their needs are. DMC is in concert with our priority of improving customer service and will continue to gather customer feedback through direct feedback, surveys and outreach in FY19 to further enhance the Veterans' experience."

For the past three years, DMC received around 1 million calls annually with an average call wait time of about 21 minutes. In FY 2017, DMC launched a series of internal efficiencies and process improvements to enhance contact center capabilities.

Initiatives included enhancing staffing levels to meet demand, enhancing contact center technology, focusing on employee development and engagement, and implementing an automated 12-month payment plan.

These Veteran-focused initiatives represent a 79 percent reduction over two years to the average time for waiting and a 40 percent increase of actual calls taken. These are all indicators of successful initiatives providing a better experience for Veterans and VA employees.

The DMC's inbound contact center serves as the central point for Veterans and their family members to make payment arrangements, or receive guidance regarding the collection process on overpayments which could include debts created from education or pension payments.

Debt counselors at the DMC work with callers in a professional and service-oriented manner to help them understand their options to address overpayments with Veterans either through extended repayment plans, the dispute process, compromise process or waiver process.

DMC's contact center provides debt counseling for the Veterans Benefits Administration, and consolidated collection services of non-health care debt for Veterans Health Administration and National Cemetery Administration, enabling these entities to focus resources on accomplishing their core missions.

DMC has provided centralized debt collection programs of Veteran benefit overpayments since 1975 and became a fee-for-service Enterprise Center in 1996.

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