

**VA**



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# Veterans Choice Program

Toolkit for Outreach Partners



Current as of December, 2015

## Partner With Us to Get the Word Out

Here at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), one of our highest priorities is implementing the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (VACAA). Enacted in August, 2014, this legislation goes a long way toward enabling VA to meet the demand for Veterans health care in the short-term. VA has put considerable focus and attention on ensuring the law is implemented seamlessly, without confusion, and without creating hardships for Veterans. As required by the law, VA has established the Veterans Choice Program (Choice Program), which allows eligible Veterans to access health care in their community.

We have a common goal: to take care of our Nation's Veterans and improve their access to care. The Department greatly values our ongoing collaboration and partnership, and we know that Veterans look to you as a trusted source of information and guidance. We believe you are uniquely positioned to help us spread the word about the Choice Program. The information and materials in this toolkit will help you more easily share information about the Choice Program to spread understanding about who is eligible and how to participate. They will also help you let potential partners, government officials, and the public know how the Choice Program contributes to the longer-term goal of enhancing Veterans' access to the care and benefits they need and have earned.

The materials in this toolkit show a number of outreach possibilities and offer your organization or office the flexibility to pick and choose pieces that work for your specific communication needs. Each section features useful materials (such as fact sheets, frequently asked questions, and social media content) and tips for actively engaging with VA. We also have included sample communications and templates that you can customize for specific events and combine with any information you create on your own.

## Background

On August 7, 2014, President Obama signed into law the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (Public Law 113-146) (VACAA). The Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) goal continues to be to provide timely, high-quality health care for Veterans.

In order to improve VA's ability to deliver high-quality health care to Veterans, section 101 of VACAA requires VA to implement the Veterans Choice Program to expand the options for eligible Veterans to elect to use health care in their communities for a period of up to three years or until the funds for the program are expended. Veterans who meet certain eligibility requirements are able to elect to receive care from eligible community providers. Prior to VACAA being passed, VA has mechanisms in place to purchase VA Care in the Community, which is still available to VA. VACAA will enhance VA's Care in the Community options.

## Program Evolution and Changes

Since enactment, several changes have been made to the Veterans Choice Program, including expansions of eligibility. Effective December 1, 2015, the following program enhancements are in place:

- VA began determining eligibility for the Veterans Choice Program based on the distance between a Veteran's place of residence and the nearest VA medical facility using driving distance rather than straight-line distance.
- VA enhanced the unusual or excessive "geoburden" eligibility criterion to include geographic challenges, environmental factors, and medical conditions.
- The enrollment date requirement has been removed so any Veteran enrolled in VA health care is now eligible for the program if he/she meets one of the specific eligibility criteria.
- The 40 mile eligibility requirement has been changed to make Veterans who live more than 40 miles driving distance from the nearest VA medical facility (including Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs) with a full-time primary care physician eligible for the Veterans Choice Program.
- Veterans may be eligible for the Veterans Choice Program if their specific health care needs, including the nature and frequency of the care needed, warrants participation in the program.

## Choice Fund and Choice Program

VACAA includes a \$10 billion fund from which VA must pay for Care in the Community furnished as a part of the Choice Program.

## Eligibility

A Veteran must be enrolled in the VA health care system and meet at least one of the following criteria:

- A) A Veteran is told by his/her local VA medical facility that they will not be able to schedule an appointment for care:
  - Within 30 days of the date the Veteran's provider determines he/she needs to be seen; or
  - Within 30 days of the date the Veteran wishes to be seen if there is no specific date from his/her provider.
- B) The Veteran's current residence is more than 40 miles driving distance from the closest VA medical facility (including Community- Based Outpatient Clinics) that has a full-time primary care physician.

- C) The Veteran resides in a location other than Guam, American Samoa, or the Republic of the Philippines and needs to travel by plane or boat to the VA medical facility closest to his/her home.
- D) The Veteran faces an unusual or excessive burden in traveling to the closest VA medical facility based on geographic challenges, environmental factors, or a medical condition.
- E) The Veteran's specific health care needs, including the nature and frequency of the care needed, warrants participation in the program. Staff at the Veteran's local VA medical facility will work with him/her to determine if he/she is eligible for any of these reasons.
- F) Resides in a State or a United States Territory without a full-service VA medical facility that provides hospital care, emergency services and surgical care having a surgical complexity of standard, and resides more than 20 miles from such a VA facility. NOTE: This criterion applies to Veterans residing in Alaska, Hawaii, New Hampshire, Guam, American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Also note that some Veterans in New Hampshire reside within 20 miles of the White River Junction VAMC.

## Cost Sharing

If an eligible Veteran has another health care plan, VA will be secondarily responsible for costs associated with non-service connected care and services furnished to eligible Veterans through the Choice Program. For all service-connected care, VA is the primary payer and the Veteran has no out-of-pocket costs.

## Medical Records

When a Veteran receives care from an eligible Care in the Community provider, the provider must submit to VA a copy of any medical record information related to the care and services provided. This information will be included in the Veteran's medical record maintained by the Department.

## Notification of Veterans and Choice Card

The primary means of notifying Veterans of their eligibility under this program was the distribution of a letter with a punch-out card to be used for this program. As of February 1, 2015, VA has mailed out cards to all Veterans enrolled in VA health care.

Please note that the Choice Card is not required for a Veteran to receive Care in the Community, but a Veteran still needs to meet the eligibility requirements.





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Using VA as a Resource

You can download each piece of the toolkit for customization and distribution at

[www.va.gov/opa/toolkit](http://www.va.gov/opa/toolkit)

These materials can be printed and shared with Veterans and any other stakeholders. This information can also be repurposed to support any inquiries received via telephone, email, or in-person.

- Veterans Choice Program: 101 For Veterans
- Veterans Choice Program: 101 For Partners
- Veterans Choice Program Flyer
- Pocket-References
- Questions & Answers by Topic
- Fact Sheet on Expansion of Choice Program Eligibility



# Veterans Choice Program: 101 For Veterans

The Veterans Choice Program (VCP) is a program to improve Veterans' access to health care by allowing eligible Veterans to use approved health care providers outside of VA. Section 101 of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (VACCA) required that VA establish the program.

## Am I eligible for the program?

You must be enrolled in the VA health care system and you must also meet at least one of the following criteria:

- You are told by your local VA medical facility that they will not be able to schedule an appointment for care either:
  - Within 30 days of the date your provider determines you need to be seen; or
  - Within 30 days of the date you wish to be seen if there is no specific date from your provider.
- Your current residence is more than 40 miles driving distance from the closest VA medical facility (including Community- Based Outpatient Clinics) that has a full-time primary care physician.
- You need to travel by plane or boat to the VA medical facility closest to your home.
- You face an unusual or excessive burden in traveling to the closest VA medical facility based on geographic challenges, environmental factors, or a medical condition. Staff at your local VA medical facility will work with you to determine if you are eligible for any of these reasons.
- Your specific health care needs, including the nature and frequency of the care needed, warrants participation in the program. Staff at your local VA medical facility will work with you to determine if you're eligible for any of these reasons.
- You reside in a State or a United States Territory without a full-service VA medical facility that provides hospital care, emergency services, and surgical care having a surgical complexity of standard, and reside more than 20 miles from such a VA medical facility. NOTE: This criterion applies to Veterans residing in Alaska, Hawaii, New Hampshire, Guam, American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Also note that some Veterans in New Hampshire reside within 20 miles of White River Junction VAMC.

## What do I need to know about getting an appointment through the program?

You can call the Choice Program Call Center at 866-606-8198 to verify your eligibility. If you are distance- eligible, you can use this same phone number to make your Veterans Choice Program appointment. If you are wait list-eligible, you will receive a phone call from a VA partner to help set up your Veterans Choice Program appointment. Please note that:

- If you do not receive approval for care under the Veterans Choice Program, you may be responsible for some or all of the costs of the non-VA treatment you receive.
- Unfortunately not all providers will be covered by the Veterans Choice Program. If your preferred provider is not available, we will recommend other providers in your area.

## What is the Veterans Choice Card?

VA mailed the Choice Card to Veterans. The Choice Card allows you to choose to receive care outside of VA if you qualify for the new program. The Choice Card doesn't replace the identification card you already use to access other VA benefits. If you are satisfied and wish to continue with your current VA care, there is nothing you need to do at this time. You should save your Choice Card in case you would like to use the program in the future. If you did not receive a Choice Card, you do not need your Choice Card to access the Choice Program. If you did not receive a Choice Card, call 866-606-8198 to find out if you are eligible and to make an appointment.

## Where can I get more information?

You can call the Choice Program Call Center at 866-606-8198 or visit: [www.va.gov/opa/choiceact](http://www.va.gov/opa/choiceact).

# Veterans

## Choice Program

The Veterans Choice Program (VCP) is a temporary program to improve Veterans' access to health care by allowing eligible Veterans to use approved health care providers outside of VA.

To find out if you are eligible call:

**866-606-8198**

For more information visit: [www.va.gov/opa/choiceact](http://www.va.gov/opa/choiceact)



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## Veterans Choice Program: 101 For Partners

### What is the Veterans Choice Program?

The Veterans Choice Program (VCP) is a program to improve Veterans' access to health care by allowing eligible Veterans to use approved health care providers outside of VA. Section 101 of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (VACCA) required that VA establish the program. In late 2014, VA began mailing all Veterans a Veterans Choice Card. The Choice Card allows Veterans to choose to receive care outside of VA when they qualify for the new program. The Choice Card doesn't replace the identification card Veterans already use to access other VA benefits.

### Who is eligible for the program?

A Veteran must be enrolled in the VA health care system and meet at least one of the following criteria:

- A Veteran is told by his/her local VA medical facility that they will not be able to schedule an appointment for care:
  - Within 30 days of the date the Veteran's provider determines he/she needs to be seen; or
  - Within 30 days of the date the Veteran wishes to be seen if there is no specific date from his/her provider.
- The Veteran's current residence is more than 40 miles driving distance from the closest VA medical facility (including Community- Based Outpatient Clinics) that has a full-time primary care physician.
- The Veteran needs to travel by plane or boat to the VA medical facility closest to his/her home.
- The Veteran faces an unusual or excessive burden in traveling to the closest VA medical facility based on geographic challenges, environmental factors, or a medical condition. Staff at the Veteran's local VA medical facility will work with him/her to determine if he/she is eligible for any of these reasons.
- The Veteran's specific health care needs, including the nature and frequency of the care needed, warrants participation in the program. Staff at the Veteran's local VA medical facility will work with him/her to determine if he/she is eligible for any of these reasons.
- The Veteran resides in a State or a United States Territory without a full-service VA medical facility that provides hospital care, emergency services and surgical care having a surgical complexity of standard, and resides more than 20 miles from such a VA facility. NOTE: This criterion applies to Veterans residing in Alaska, Hawaii, New Hampshire, Guam, American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Also note that some Veterans in New Hampshire reside within 20 miles of White River Junction VAMC.

### How can I keep up to date with the latest updates about the Choice Program?

The Choice Act website is the central resource for the latest updates about the program. There you will find the latest fact sheets, frequently asked questions and be able to "live chat" with a VA representative about the Veterans Choice Program. The Choice Act website can be found by visiting, visit [www.va.gov/opa/choiceact](http://www.va.gov/opa/choiceact). Each VA medical facility has a designated "Choice Champion" who has received specific training on the Choice Program and can answer questions.

### What should I tell Veterans who have questions about their eligibility?

- Veterans can call the Choice Program Call Center at 866-606-8198 for more information, to verify eligibility.
- Veterans can also visit [www.va.gov/opa/choiceact](http://www.va.gov/opa/choiceact) for more information about the program.

### If I have a question about a specific Veteran, what do I do?

Direct the Veteran to call the Choice Program Call Center, visit [www.va.gov/opa/choiceact](http://www.va.gov/opa/choiceact) to live chat with a representative, or contact the Choice Champion at their local VA medical facility."

## ➤ Questions & Answers by Topic

*Please ensure that when a Veteran is in doubt about any of their eligibility or care, they call the Choice Program Call Center at **866-606-8198**.*

## ➤ Eligibility

### How can I confirm if I am eligible for the Choice Program?

You must be enrolled in the VA health care system and you must also meet at least one of the following criteria:

- You are told by your local VA medical facility that they will not be able to schedule an appointment for care either:
  - Within 30 days of the date your provider determines you need to be seen; or
  - Within 30 days of the date you wish to be seen if there is no specific date from your provider.
- Your current residence is more than 40 miles driving distance from the closest VA medical facility (including Community- Based Outpatient Clinics) that has a full-time primary care physician.
- You need to travel by plane or boat to the VA medical facility closest to your home.
- You face an unusual or excessive burden in traveling to the closest VA medical facility based on geographic challenges, environmental factors, or a medical condition. Staff at your local VA medical facility will work with you to determine you are eligible for any of these reasons.
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- You reside in a State or a United States Territory without a full-service VA medical facility that provides hospital care, emergency services, and surgical care having a surgical complexity of standard, and reside more than 20 miles from such a VA medical facility. NOTE: This criterion applies to Veterans residing in Alaska, Hawaii, New Hampshire, Guam, American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Also note that some Veterans in New Hampshire reside within 20 miles of White River Junction VAMC.

## ➤ Questions & Answers by Topic

### ➤ Eligibility

#### **What happens once I have been determined as eligible?**

If you are distance-eligible, you can call 866-606-8198 to make your Veterans Choice Program appointment. If you are wait list-eligible, you will receive a phone call from a VA partner to help set up your Veterans Choice Program appointment.

#### **One of the eligibility factors is the inability to get an appointment within 30 days. Can you expand on what this means?**

If the VA facility is not able to schedule your appointment to occur up to 30 days from your clinically indicated date, you will be eligible to participate in the Choice Program for that particular appointment. If no such clinically indicated date can be determined, you will qualify for the Veterans Choice Program if the VA facility is not able to schedule your appointment to occur up to 30 days from the date you prefer to be seen.

#### **What does clinically indicated date mean?**

The clinically indicated date is the date you and your medical provider agree should be the next date you are seen for care. If the VA medical facility is unable to schedule an appointment up to 30 days from that date you may be eligible for the Veterans Choice Program.

#### **Is the 40 mile calculation based on the distance from a Community-Based Outpatient Clinic or the main VA where I am enrolled?**

This calculation is based on the driving distance from your permanent residence, or an active temporary address, to the closest VA facility (including Community-Based Outpatient Clinics and VA Medical Centers) that has a full-time primary care provider.

#### **I have to commute to the nearest VA Medical Center by boat; can you explain the Air, Boat and Ferry eligibility requirements?**

If your local VA medical facility eligibility staff determines that you must travel from your residence to the nearest VA medical facility by air, boat, or ferry, they will inform you that you are eligible for the Veterans Choice Program. Once you are informed of your eligibility, call the Choice Program Call Center at 866-606-8198.

#### **I didn't get my Choice Card, what do I do?**

You do not need your Choice Card to access the Choice Program. If you didn't receive a Choice Card, call **866-606-8198** to find out if you are eligible and to make an appointment.

## If I do not qualify for the Veterans Choice Program, are there other options I can use to access ZV8/fZ USdWagfe[VWfZWH31

Yes, there are other Care in the Community care programs you may be able to use. Each program has its own eligibility requirements. Talk to your VA medical provider or visit <http://www.va.gov/purchasedcare/> for more information about these programs.



### Can I call my non-VA doctor to make an appointment?

No, please call the Choice Program call center at **866-606-8198**

### If my appointment is over 30 days or I live more than 40 miles away, can I see my doctor at the VA?

Yes, the Choice Program is an opportunity for Veterans to choose how they would like to receive care. Even if you are eligible for the Program, you may see your doctor at the VA.



### My doctor doesn't currently participate in the Choice Program, can he/she join?

Yes. VA is actively seeking to expand its network of community providers. As of December, 2015, VA has created more flexibility in the types of providers who may participate in the program – if your provider was previously ineligible to participate, please encourage them to look at the new guidelines. Your doctor can call **866-606-8198** to learn more about the Veterans Choice Program and to become an approved Choice Provider. If your preferred provider is not available under the Program, we will recommend other providers in your area. Your doctor can find more information here:

[http://www.va.gov/opa/choiceact/for\\_providers.asp](http://www.va.gov/opa/choiceact/for_providers.asp)

### If I cancel an appointment and then reschedule, how will that change the clinically indicated date?

If you cancel or reschedule, your provider will specify a new clinically indicated date. If the re-scheduled appointment is more than 30 days from that date, then you may be eligible for the Choice Program.

### How do I get my prescription filled if I use the Choice Program?

The Choice Program non-VA Provider will issue a prescription to the Veteran with up to a 14 day supply of an urgently or emergently needed National Formulary drug. The Veteran may have the 14 day supply prescription filled at any non-VA pharmacy of his/her choosing and may submit a request for reimbursement to VA. For prescriptions that are not urgent or emergent, please follow standard procedures to fill a prescription at the VA pharmacy.

### Can I use the Choice Program and see my doctor at my local VA medical facility?

Yes. The Choice Program is not an “either/or” situation. If you use the Choice Program to receive one type care, you can still continue to receive care at the VA for other types of care. For example, if you qualify for the Choice Program to see a urologist under the 30 day eligibility requirement, you can go see your VA physician for any other type of care.

### If I can't get a primary care appointment in 30 days, can I use the Choice Program?

Yes, primary care is covered under the Choice Program.

### Is Emergency care covered by the Choice Program?

No, emergency care is not covered under the Choice Program. All care under the Choice Program is required to be preauthorized. VA has other options for you if you require emergency care. Please contact your local VA medical facility for more information.

### Do I qualify for the Choice Program for specialty care or elective surgery, such as cataract surgery?

Yes, you can be referred to the Choice Program for any type of care except emergency and long-term care.

### I use prosthetics; can I use the Choice Program?

Yes.

### As a female Veteran, I require obstetrics and gynecology services, but the nearest VA medical facility doesn't offer this care. Can I go ahead and use the Veterans Choice Program to get an appointment outside the system?

The Choice Program mileage eligibility is based on the distance between your place of residence and the nearest VA health care facility that has a full-time primary care physician. However, you may be eligible to use the Program if the VA can't schedule your appointment within 30 days of the clinically indicated date, or if no such date can be determined, your preferred date.

## Insurance Information

### Do I submit my personal insurance information if I qualify for the Choice Program?

Yes, the Veterans Choice Program requires Veterans with other health insurance to provide that information.

### Are there any other health insurance plans that are excluded from Choice Program billing?

The only other health insurance excluded from the Choice Program billing process are government health benefits plans, such as Medicaid, Medicare, and TRICARE.

### Will copays be collected by the community provider?

VA copays will not be collected at the time of the appointment but will be billed by VA after the appointment, in the same way as receiving care at your local facility. If you are subject to copayments now, you will be subject to the same copayment requirements under the Choice Program. Your copay amount will be determined after the service is received.

### Am I responsible for my private insurance deductible if I get care through the Choice Program?

Yes, if you are receiving non-service connected care. Your private health insurance will be the primary payer for non-service connected care and you may be responsible for the health insurance deductibles cost-shares. If you are receiving service connected care, you will not be responsible for your deductible as VA is primarily responsible for service connected care received through the Choice Program.

### Can I use the Choice Program if I don't have personal insurance?

Yes. While submission of private health insurance is a requirement of the Choice Program, not having private health insurance does not exclude you from the Program.

### Is my private insurance charged for service connected care?

No, under the Choice Program service connected care is covered by the VA.

# 02

## 'Plug and Play' Content

This content can be used as source material for any traditional communications you develop or outreach events that your organization plans.

- Text for Electronic and Print Publications
- Sample Briefing Slides

## Text for Electronic and Print Publications

*If your organization has a regular newsletter, you can include information about the Veterans Choice Program. These samples can be customized for specific audiences.*

## Brief Blurb

You might be eligible for the Veterans Choice Program! The VA launched the Choice Program on November 5, 2014 as part of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (VACAA). This program gives eligible Veterans the option to receive health care from providers in their communities.

To get started, call **1-866-606-8198**. VA will work with you to determine your eligibility, and if you are eligible to ensure you are approved for care in your community and schedule you with a local care provider.

## Extended Text

### Option for Care: Veterans Choice Program

Have you heard about the Veterans Choice Program? The VA launched the Choice Program on November 5, 2014 as part of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (VACAA). This program gives eligible Veterans the option to receive health care from providers in their communities.

The Department of Veterans Affairs sent all Veterans a Choice Card. If your eligibility for this new program is verified, the Choice Card provides you with flexibility in meeting your health care needs. Please note that the Choice Card does not replace the identification card you already use to access other VA benefits.

You might be eligible for the Choice Program if:

- You are told by your local VA medical facility that they will not be able to schedule an appointment for care:
  - Within 30 days of the date your provider determines you need to be seen; or
  - Within 30 days of the date you wish to be seen if there is no specific date from your provider.
- You are told by Your current residence is more than 40 miles driving distance from the closest VA medical facility (including Community- Based Outpatient Clinics) that has a full-time primary care physician.
- You need to travel by plane or boat to the VA medical facility closest to your home.
- You face an unusual or excessive burden in traveling to the closest VA medical facility based on geographic challenges, environmental factors, or a medical condition. Staff at your local VA medical facility will work with you to determine you are eligible for any of these reasons.



- Your specific health care needs, including the nature and frequency of the care needed, warrants participation in the program. Staff at your local VA medical facility will work with you to determine if you're eligible for any of these reasons.
- You reside in a State or a United States Territory without a full-service VA medical facility that provides hospital care, emergency services, and surgical care having a surgical complexity of standard, and reside more than 20 miles from such a VA medical facility. NOTE: This criterion applies to Veterans residing in Alaska, Hawaii, New Hampshire, Guam, American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Also note that some Veterans in New Hampshire reside within 20 miles of White River Junction VAMC."

To find out if you are eligible for the Choice Program, call **1-866-606-8198**. If you are satisfied and wish to continue with your current VA care, there is nothing you need to do at this time. Save your Choice Card in case you would like to use the program in the future.

## Sample Briefing Slides

If you are hosting a gathering of Veterans for an informational session and would like to spread the word about the Veterans Choice Program, you can use these slides to get you started.

You can download them at [www.va.gov/opa/toolkit](http://www.va.gov/opa/toolkit)



Insert Your Logo Here

### Veterans Choice Program

Sample Choice Program 101 Slides



Insert Your Logo Here

#### Veterans Choice Program Overview

- The Department of Veterans Affairs strives to ensure quality, timely care for all Veterans.
- In an effort to increase Veterans' access to health care, VA implemented the Veterans Choice Program (VCP) – a program that allows eligible Veterans to use approved health care providers outside of the VA network.
- The Veterans Choice Program was implemented as part of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (VACAA).








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#### Veterans Choice Cards

- VA mailed all Veterans a Veterans Choice Card. The Choice Card allows you to choose to receive care outside of VA if you qualify for the new program.
- The Choice Card does not replace the identification card you already use to access other VA benefits.
- If you are satisfied and wish to continue with your current VA care, there is nothing you need to do at this time. You should save your Choice Card in case you would like to use the program in the future.
- Don't worry if you did not receive or have misplaced your Choice Card. Call 866-606-8198 to find out if you are eligible for the program!





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#### Determining Eligibility

You must be enrolled in VA health care and meet at least one of the following criteria:

- ✓ You are told by your local VA medical facility that they will not be able to schedule an appointment for care either:
  - ✓ Within 30 days of the date your provider determines you need to be seen; or
  - ✓ Within 30 days of the date you wish to be seen if there is no specific date from your provider.
- ✓ Your current residence is more than 40 miles driving distance from the closest VA medical facility (including Community-Based Outpatient Clinics) that has a full-time primary care physician.
- ✓ You need to travel by plane or boat to the VA medical facility closest to your home.
- ✓ You face an unusual or excessive burden in traveling to the closest VA medical facility based on geographic challenges, environmental factors, or a medical condition. Staff at your local VA medical facility will work with you to determine you are eligible for any of these reasons.
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- ✓ You reside in a State or a United States Territory without a full-service VA medical facility that provides hospital care, emergency services, and surgical care having a surgical complexity of standard, and reside more than 20 miles from such a VA medical facility. *NOTE: This criterion applies to Veterans residing in Alaska, Hawaii, New Hampshire, Guam, American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Also note that some Veterans in New Hampshire reside within 20 miles of White River Junction VAMC.*



Insert Your Logo Here

#### Making an Appointment

If you believe you have met the qualifying criteria and you believe you are eligible to receive this VA benefit:

Call the Choice Program Call Center at

**866-606-8198**

to verify your eligibility.



### Reaching Veterans through Social Media

Social media is a high-impact, low-cost option for directly communicating with Veterans. This approach can assist with distribution of information on the Veterans Choice Program to a wide Veteran audience, drive the conversation regarding Choice Program eligibility requirements, and provide a forum for Veterans to ask questions.

- Engaging with the Department of Veterans Affairs
- Sample Facebook Content
- Sample Twitter Content

## Engaging with the Department of Veterans Affairs via Social Media

By partnering with the Department of Veterans Affairs on social media efforts, a broader Veteran audience can be reached through the use of hashtags, tags, references, and retweets. Please see below for ways to engage with VA through social media.

### Facebook

Veterans Health Administration (VHA) - U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
[www.facebook.com/VeteransHealth](http://www.facebook.com/VeteransHealth)

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
[www.facebook.com/VeteransAffairs](http://www.facebook.com/VeteransAffairs)

### Twitter

@DeptVetAffairs - [twitter.com/DeptVetAffairs/](https://twitter.com/DeptVetAffairs/)  
@VeteransHealth - [twitter.com/VeteransHealth](https://twitter.com/VeteransHealth)

### Flickr

[www.flickr.com/photos/VeteransAffairs/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/VeteransAffairs/)

### Google Plus

[plus.google.com/+DeptVetAffairs/posts](https://plus.google.com/+DeptVetAffairs/posts)

### Instagram

@DeptVetAffairs - <https://instagram.com/deptvetaffairs/>

### You Tube

[www.youtube.com/user/DeptVetAffairs](http://www.youtube.com/user/DeptVetAffairs)

### Elog

[www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/](http://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/)

Most local VA Medical Centers have individual Facebook pages and/or Twitter handles.  
To find your local facilities on social media visit:

[www.va.gov/opa/socialmedia.asp](http://www.va.gov/opa/socialmedia.asp)

## Sample Facebook Content



### Facebook

- Attention Veterans: You might be eligible to receive health care through the VA's Veterans Choice Program. Visit <http://va.gov/opa/choiceact/> to get the details!
  - Many Veterans will now have the option to receive non-VA health care rather than waiting for a VA appointment or traveling to a VA facility. VA's new Choice Program covers VA Care in the Community for eligible Veterans. Call **866-606-8198** or visit <http://va.gov/opa/choiceact/> to learn more.
- Veterans - Live more than 40 miles from a VA medical facility? You could be eligible to receive health care in your community through the VA's Veterans Choice Program. Call **866-606-8198** or visit <http://va.gov/opa/choiceact/> to learn more.
- Veterans – Need to travel by plane or boat to the VA medical facility closest to your home? You could be eligible to receive health care in your community through the VA's Veterans Choice Program. Call **866-606-8198** or visit <http://va.gov/opa/choiceact/> to learn more.
- Veterans – Have you been told by your local VA medical facility that you will need to wait more than 30 days from your preferred date or the date medically determined by your physician for an appointment? You could be eligible to receive health care in your community through the VA's Veterans Choice Program. Call **866-606-8198** or visit <http://va.gov/opa/choiceact/> to learn more.

### Use this for your Facebook graphic



**Veterans**  
Choice Program

The Veterans Choice Program (VCP) is a temporary program to improve Veterans' access to health care by allowing eligible Veterans to use approved health care providers outside of VA.

To find out if you are eligible call:  
**866-606-8198**  
For more information visit: [www.va.gov/opa/choiceact](http://www.va.gov/opa/choiceact)

U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs



VA

## ➤ Sample Twitter Content



### Twitter

- Have questions about the #Veterans Choice Program? Get the facts by calling **866-606-8198** or visit **<http://va.gov/opa/choiceact/>**
- #Veterans - You may be eligible to access health care in your community through the Veterans Choice Program **<http://va.gov/opa/choiceact/>**
- VA has rolled out the Choice Program as an option for eligible #Veterans to access health care. Learn more: **<http://va.gov/opa/choiceact/>**
- Looking for more information on the #Veterans Choice Program? Call **866-606-8198** for all the news you can use!
- Looking for more information on the #Veterans Choice Program? Visit **<http://va.gov/opa/choiceact/>** for all the news you can use!

# 04

## Using VA as a Resource

- Involving VA in Your Outreach
- Staying Connected and Up-to-Date



## ➤ Involving VA in Your Outreach

### **Planning to host town halls, conference calls or webinars?**

The Department of Veterans Affairs is happy to provide a Veterans Choice Program expert to share in-depth information about the program.

Please see the Leadership Toolkit at [www.va.gov/opa/choiceact](http://www.va.gov/opa/choiceact) for detailed preparation materials and sample invitations, top line messaging, and slides for Veteran town hall meetings.

### **Looking for ideas on additional areas to distribute flyers, fact sheets, and Q&A's?**

VA can help you partner with local places Veterans frequent such as the post office, grocery store, hardware store, etc.

### **Need additional social media post ideas?**

VA can provide you with a 'Fact of the Week' for both Facebook and Twitter to deliver information to Veterans in bite-size form on a consistent basis.

### **Want the latest facts and figures about the Veterans Choice Program?**

VA can provide you with regular updates about the progress of the program and the statistics about the use of the program by Veterans.

To receive any of the above information, please contact

Jill Snyder, VHA Communications  
[Jill.Snyder@va.gov](mailto:Jill.Snyder@va.gov)



## ➤ Staying Connected & Up-to-Date

**To learn more about the Veterans Choice Program, visit:**

[www.va.gov/opa/choiceact/](http://www.va.gov/opa/choiceact/)

**To view the Veterans Choice Program introductory video, visit:**

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=i9nnsRIX5b8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i9nnsRIX5b8)

**To determine if a Veteran is eligible, visit:**

[www.va.gov/healthbenefits/apps/choice/](http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/apps/choice/)

**To find out how to set up a Veteran Choice appointment, visit:**

[www.va.gov/opa/choiceact/how\\_to\\_get\\_started.asp](http://www.va.gov/opa/choiceact/how_to_get_started.asp)

**To view the most up-to-date Veterans Choice Program Fact Sheets, visit:**

[www.va.gov/opa/choiceact/factsheets\\_and\\_details.asp](http://www.va.gov/opa/choiceact/factsheets_and_details.asp)

**To read the entire Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014, visit:**

[www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-113publ146/pdf/PLAW-113publ146.pdf](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-113publ146/pdf/PLAW-113publ146.pdf)

**To read a summary of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014, visit:**

[www.va.gov/opa/choiceact/documents/Choice-Act-Summary.pdf](http://www.va.gov/opa/choiceact/documents/Choice-Act-Summary.pdf)

**To find out about other aspects of VA medical care or to learn more about enrolling in VA health services, call 1-877-222-VETS or visit:**

[www.va.gov/healthbenefits/apps/choice/](http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/apps/choice/)