

Veterans Choice Act

Helping our Veterans Navigate the New Law

Is a Veteran eligible for care under the Choice Act?

- A Veteran must have been enrolled in VA health care on or before August 1, 2014, or be eligible to enroll as a recently discharged combat Veteran within 5 years of separation. Additionally, a Veteran must also meet at least one of the following criteria:
 1. The Veteran is told by his/her local VA medical facility that he/she will need to wait more than 30 days from his/her preferred date or the date medically determined by his/her physician.
 2. The Veteran's current residence is more than 40 miles from the closest VA health care facility.
 3. 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.
 4. The Veteran faces a geographic challenge, such as extensive distances around water or other geologic formations, such as mountains, that presents a significant travel hardship.
- To best determine eligibility, use the eligibility tool located at <http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/apps/choice/>. There is also a link to this tool located on the VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System (VAAHS) intranet homepage. This tool will help determine if a Veteran may be eligible for care under the Choice Act. Only the Third-party Administer (TPA) can make the determination if the Veteran is eligible or not.

The tool says the Veteran may be eligible, and they are interested in seeing a non-VA provider, or it says they are not eligible; what does he/she do now?

- If the tool says that a Veteran may be eligible, the Veteran must contact the TPA at 866-606-8198. The TPA will determine if the Veteran is eligible or not. If the Veteran is eligible, the TPA will schedule an appointment for the Veteran with the Veteran's non-VA provider of choice.
- If the Veteran is determined to not be eligible at this time, they can still receive their care at the VA if they are enrolled in VA health care.

What if the Veteran does not want to see a non-VA provider?

- The Veteran can elect to keep their appointment with their VA provider. If they choose to remain with the VA, they do not need to do anything other than attend their scheduled appointments.



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Will the Veteran receive travel pay to these appointments?

- If the Veteran currently receives travel pay for their VA appointments, they will receive travel pay for appointments offered under the Choice Act. To receive travel pay, the Veteran will need to provide proof that they were seen for the specific appointment. Adequate proof is a letter containing a medical facility letterhead with the specific appointment information and a signature. The Veteran will be paid mileage from their home of record to the provider's location.

How does a Veteran receive prescriptions when they see a non-VA provider under Choice?

- All prescriptions are to be filled at the VA, however if the non-VA provider determines that a medical condition requires emergent treatment, up to a 14-day supply can be prescribed and filled by an outside pharmacy. To do so, the Veteran will need to pay for the cost of the prescription upfront and will need to bring a receipt to their local VA for reimbursement of those costs. Additional refills will require a new prescription.
- All non-emergent prescription requests need to be faxed to (734) 222-7703, mailed to: Pharmacy Service (119) 2215 Fuller Rd. Ann Arbor, MI 48103, or delivered by hand to the local VA Pharmacy.
- All Schedule II Controlled Substances must be delivered by hand or mailed.
- All prescription requests must contain the prescription from the provider and the authorization letter, which authorized the non-VA care through the Choice Program. The non-VA care provider should have this letter.
- The Veteran will be responsible for any co-pay that they are currently responsible for.

What should I do if a Veteran has clinical questions or concerns?

- There may be Veterans who disagree with the timeframe in which their doctor believes they need to be seen for a particular appointment. For these concerns, a Telecare Record Manager (TRM) alert must be sent directly to the specialty care manager. To send an alert, select tools in CPRS, then more, and finally select "TRMPlus". Enter the details of the concern and select the appropriate care manager. The care manager will consult with the provider(s) who will make a clinical determination and will contact the Veteran.
- All other clinical concerns will be routed as currently prescribed.

Where can I get more information and answers to questions?

- More information is publically available at <http://www.va.gov/opa/choiceact/index.asp>.
- An email group has been created for VAAHS employees and Veterans to contact our facility specific Choice Champions. Please send any questions to VHAANNChoiceChampions@va.gov. One of our champions will respond to your emails within an appropriate time. ****These are VAAHS employees****