

**NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF
THE AMERICAN LEGION
October 12-13, 2022
Indianapolis, Indiana**

Resolution No. 14: Access to Care

Origin: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission

Submitted by: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes that the future of Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care is a hybrid system consisting of inpatient and outpatient care, telehealth, and community care; and

WHEREAS, The VA standards for primary care or mental health appointments are meant to be completed within 20 days or a 30-minute driving time from the veteran's residence, and specialty care appointments within 28 days or a 60-minute drive time; and

WHEREAS, In their 2022 Access to Care Standards report, VA identified that the number of days tracked for appointment scheduling started from the time the referral was received and suggested the possibility of increasing drivetime for highly rural veterans; and

WHEREAS, Veterans receiving care in the community currently may not have the chance to schedule an appointment until weeks after the initial request with some veterans waiting months to schedule a community care appointment; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Surgeon General and National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention say gaps in care and transition periods from inpatient to outpatient care are times of increased suicide risk; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Defense and VA must accept shared responsibility for patient care and ensure a seamless transition with no interruption in services; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion testified in June 2021, that the current access standards are the "minimum standard" for VA to complete an appointment, not just schedule it; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting, assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on October 12-13, 2022, That The American Legion calls for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to maintain veteran-centric access standards that require veterans to be presented with the option of a community care referral if wait times for primary care exceed 20-days or a 30-minute drive or in the case of a specialty care a 28-day wait time or 60-minute drive; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That VA develop a secure mobile application that gives the veterans the ability to request, schedule, and confirm medical appointments with healthcare providers participating in the Veteran Community Care Program; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That authorization for referrals be immediately sent as a secure message to the designated provider or to the veteran so the veteran may schedule their own appointment if desired; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That VA effectively track community care and direct care wait times from the time an appointment is requested to its completion; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That VA shall streamline the community care referral process to ensure that veterans have access to care in the most efficient manner possible if the access standards are met.