

# How Jon is fixing the **VETERANS' CHOICE PROGRAM**

Senator Jon Tester is taking a three-pronged approach to fixing the VA Choice Program so veterans can access care more quickly in their communities. Jon's plan includes passing legislation to cut red tape and expedite care, introducing a bill to hold VA contractors accountable, and convincing the VA to cut out the middle man so Montana veterans can schedule appointments faster.

## 1) Cutting Red Tape to Expedite Care

In March, Jon introduced the *Veterans Choice Program Improvement Act*, which makes the VA the primary payer under the Choice Program. This bill was unanimously passed by both the Senate and the House and signed into law by the President on April 19, 2017.

**This legislation will ultimately improve and expedite the delivery of quality care to veterans by:**

- Reducing confusion and out-of-pocket expenses for veterans, while also helping them book appointments and get in to see their doctors faster.
- Improving the sharing of medical records between the VA and community providers, which helps veterans receive more seamless and comprehensive care.
- Easing billing complications and reimbursing community providers in a more timely manner, which will help keep local hospitals and clinics serving veterans.

## 3) Streamlining the Appointments Process

At Jon's repeated urging, VA Secretary David Shulkin has agreed to let **VA Montana schedule Choice Program appointments directly**. This change will help reduce wait times for Montana veterans who are currently forced to book their appointments through Health Net, a third-party provider that has left veterans waiting days, weeks, and even months for an appointment. VA Montana will now help veterans schedule their appointments closer to home.

**"The Choice Program was designed to serve Montana veterans by improving access to care, but the bureaucracy of the program is stalling access to care. Veterans deserve the very best health care, and this plan will make sure that veterans can access the timely, quality care they have earned."** – Jon Tester



## 2) Holding VA Contractors Accountable

Jon has also introduced the *VA Performance Accountability and Contractor Transparency (PACT) Act*, to increase oversight and accountability among VA contractors.

*The PACT Act* would make the details of VA contracts over \$100 million public and require the companies being contracted to report their progress to Congress.

**Under the PACT Act:**

- VA contracts must include a plan of action and milestones, along with measurable metrics tracking cost, schedule & services rendered.
- Contractors must document their progress and provide performance updates to the VA, Congress, and certain oversight committees.
- The Secretary of the VA has the authority to penalize contractors if their performance does not meet stated standards.