



How Jon is Fixing Veteran's Choice

THE PROBLEM

The Veterans' Choice Program was intended to give veterans quicker access to care by allowing them to see doctors outside of the VA system if distance or wait times prevented them from accessing care at a VA facility. Unfortunately, the program is not working the way it was intended. Patients are waiting too long for appointments and providers are struggling to navigate the new bureaucratic system. Additionally, there have been many complaints about HealthNet, the third party administrator that is responsible for scheduling appointments and paying providers.

Our nation must uphold its promise to our veterans.

SOLUTION #2: Hold Folks Accountable

After holding over 30 outreach sessions in Montana, Jon brought top VA and HealthNet officials to Montana to iron out problems with scheduling and provider payments. As a result the following steps are being taken:

- Fort Harrison is now scheduling appointments with Choice funds if HealthNet is unable to schedule an urgent appointment within 2 days, or a non-urgent appointment within 7 days.
- Providers can now check the status of their claims online at availability.com.
- Medical records are now decoupled from claims to expedite the reimbursement process for providers.

SOLUTION #1: *Veterans First Act*

Jon worked with a bipartisan group of Senators to write the *Veterans First Act*, which will bring more accountability and transparency to the VA, extend care to more veterans and their families, and fix the VA's Choice Program by:

- Authorizing the VA to enter into local contracts with community providers to provide care to veterans in a timely manner. This will allow the VA to work directly with community providers and no longer have to rely heavily upon HealthNet.
- Providing the VA with the funding flexibility it needs to steer veterans to the proper route of care.
- Establishing the VA as the primary payer under Choice, which will reduce out-of-pocket expenses for veterans and reduce administrative delays to care.
- Establishing stronger standards for the timely reimbursement of community providers.
- Improving the sharing of medical records between the VA and community providers.

U.S. SENATOR FOR MONTANA
JON TESTER