



Veterans Choice Program: 101 For Veterans

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. 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 have been enrolled in VA health care on or before August 1, 2014, or be eligible to enroll as a recently discharged combat Veteran. Additionally, you must also meet at least one of the following criteria:

- You are told by your local VA medical facility that you will need to wait more than 30 days for an appointment from the date clinically determined by your physician, or, if not such date is provided, our preferred date.
- Your residence is more than 40 miles driving distance from the closest VA medical facility.
- 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.
- 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 **must** call the Choice Program Call Center at **866-606-8198** to verify your eligibility and set up an 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.



Veterans Choice Program: 101 For Partners

What is the 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. 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 have been enrolled in VA health care on or before August 1, 2014, or be eligible to enroll as a recently discharged combat Veteran. Additionally, a Veteran must also meet at least one of the following criteria:

- The Veteran is told by his/her local VA medical facility that he/she will need to wait more than 30 days for an appointment from the date clinically determined by his/her physician or, if no such date is provided, the Veteran's preferred date.
- The Veteran's residence is more than 40 miles driving distance from the closest VA medical facility.
- 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 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 press releases, fact sheet, frequently asked questions, among other information. The Choice Act website can be found by visiting, visit 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, and make an appointment.
- Veterans can also visit 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 or to contact the Choice Champion at their local VA medical facility.

VETERANS CHOICE PROGRAM



VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

The Veterans Choice Program provides eligible Veterans the option to receive non-VA health care from approved providers in their communities.

Am I eligible?



Have you been told by your local VA medical facility that they can't schedule your appointment **within 30 days** of the clinically indicated date or if no such date can be determined, your preferred date?



Is your current residence **more than 40 miles** from the closest VA medical facility?



Do you need to travel by air, boat or ferry to the VA medical facility closest to your home?



Do 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.

If you were enrolled in VA Health care on or before Aug 1, 2014 or you are eligible to enroll as a combat Veteran, and answered

“YES”

to any of the questions, you may be eligible!

How do I set up an appointment?

Call:
866-606-8198

1

Gather your information about any other health insurance coverage you may have (e.g., employer, union-based health plans)



2

Call 1-866-606-8198 to make sure you qualify + schedule an appointment. When you call, we will walk you through the following steps:

- You will be asked to enter your ZIP code, and first and last name.
- We will check to make sure you are eligible for this program.
- We will check which of your needs are covered by the VA.
- You will be asked for your address and the name of your preferred non-VA provider. Unfortunately, not all providers will be covered so if your preferred provider is not available, we will recommend other providers in your area.



3

We will then work with you to schedule an appointment.



This hotline is exclusively for making sure you are eligible for the Choice Program and setting up a non-VA care appointment. If you have questions about other aspects of your VA medical care or want to learn more about enrolling in VA health services, please visit www.va.gov/health.



Veterans

Choice Program

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To find out if you are eligible and to make an appointment call:

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For more information visit: www.va.gov/opa/choiceact



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs



VA

Veterans

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U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs



VA

➤ 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.
- 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.

➤ 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 Medical facility (including Community-Based Outpatient Clinics and VA Medical Centers) that has a full-time primary care physician.

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

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.



Insert Your
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Veterans Choice Program

Sample Choice Program 101 Slides



Veterans Choice Program Overview

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- 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).

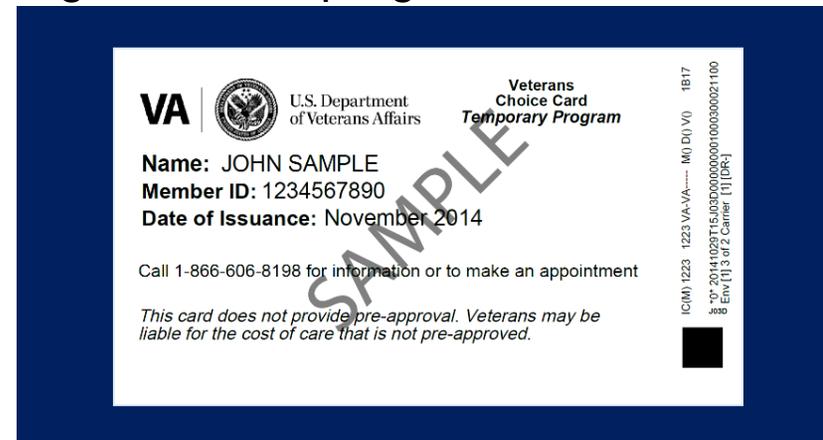




Veterans Choice Cards

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- 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 and to make an appointment.





Determining Eligibility

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You must have been enrolled in VA health care on or before August 1, 2014, or you are eligible to enroll as a recently discharged combat Veteran. Additionally, you must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- ✓ You are told by your local VA medical facility that you will need to wait more than 30 days for an appointment from the date clinically determined by your physician, or, if not such date is provided, our preferred date.
- ✓ Your home is more than 40 miles driving distance from the closest VA medical facility.
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Making an Appointment

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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 and set up an appointment.

