



PRESS RELEASE

Vietnam Veterans of America

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VVA: Mission Act Falls Short

(Washington, D.C)—“In light of the June 4 Government Accountability report on the Veterans Choice Program, we are concerned that *The VA Mission Act*, the \$55 billion spending package, which awaits the president’s signature, will fall short of accomplishing its intended goals,” said John Rowan, VVA National President.

“While we applaud aspects of the bill which serve the needs of our veterans today, of grave concern is the GAO’s finding that the Veterans Health Administration and the VA Medical Centers are not able to respond to the needs of the Choice Program because of ‘inadequacies of networks, geographic distribution, and insufficient numbers of community providers,’ ” noted Rowan.

“Allocating a mere 120 days for the development of regulations to guide the implementation of this massive and complicated overhaul is irrational and unrealistic,” said Rowan. The illusive “oversight” promised with Choice is still not in place. The VA’s antiquated IT infrastructure does not allow communication with organizations within the VA, let alone outside entities, such as the community providers described in *The Mission Act*.

“Will Congress still retain authority over this proposed shadow healthcare delivery system? Oversight with accountability is not spelled out to our satisfaction in this legislation,” noted Rowan. “Who will be responsible? How will it be accomplished? Will HIPPA affect the exchange of information called for in the legislation? What are the penalties for violation of standards of care, malpractice, accreditation, and credentialing of private providers, waste, fraud and abuse?”

Capacity, as noted in the GAO Report, is a major concern. “How many veterans will actually receive care?” said Rowan. “Expanding the scope of the programs and services of Choice without a firm foundation is a recipe for disaster which will ultimately cheat veterans out of the health care they have earned and deserve. We stand ready to work with the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Administration to address the shortfalls.”

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