



Tillis Cosponsors the Care Veterans Deserve Act

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Senator Thom Tillis (R-NC) joined Senator John McCain (R-AZ) to introduce the Care Veterans Deserve Act of 2016, legislation that would expand access to care at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) while enhancing choice and flexibility in veterans health care. The legislation supplements and expands on the major reforms enacted by the Veterans’ Access to Care Through Choice, Accountability and Transparency Act of 2014, which was signed into law in the wake of the scandal of denied and delayed care at VA hospitals around the country.

Senator Tillis spoke at a press conference earlier today to help announce the introduction of the legislation. [Watch the video here.](#)

“While major progress has been made in reforming the VA, much more needs to be done to tear down bureaucratic hurdles that are denying veterans the flexible, quality care they have earned and deserve,” **said Senator McCain.** “This legislation is critical to expanding access to care for working veterans, while ensuring every veteran has flexibility and choice – no matter where they live or how long they are waiting for care. We have a long way to go to reform the VA, but this legislation offers important short- and long-term solutions to ensure our veterans receive the care they deserve now and well into the future.”

“The Care Veterans Deserve Act will make it easier for the brave men and women who have served our nation to have access to timely and reliable health care services, regardless of where they live,” **said Senator Tillis.** “The legislation also continues efforts to apply the private

sector's best practices to the VA system, which will cut down on waste and inefficiency and ultimately help deliver higher quality care for our veterans.”

Senators Kelly Ayotte (R-NH), John Cornyn (R-TX), Ted Cruz (R-TX), Joni Ernst (R-IA), Jeff Flake (R-AZ), and Lindsey Graham (R-SC) joined Senator Tillis in co-sponsoring the legislation.

The Care Veterans Deserve Act would address a major complaint by today's veterans of never-ending wait-times for appointments by implementing the following changes:

Give Veterans Access to Walk-In Clinics

- Allow all veterans enrolled the VA health care system to visit walk-in clinics without pre-authorization from the VA or copayment by the veteran
- Require the VA to contract with a national chain of walk-in clinics to provide veterans access
- Ensure walk-in clinics notify the VA of veteran services in order to ensure patient health records are up to date

Expand VA Operating Hours to Nights and Weekends

- Require the VA to extend VA pharmacy hours to Saturday, Sunday, federal holidays and until 8pm on weekdays to provide comparable pharmacy services offered by retail pharmacies
- Enable qualified, community health care providers to offer volunteer services to veterans on nights and weekends

Make the Veteran Choice Card Program Permanent and Universal

- Make the pilot Veteran Choice Card program permanent
- Make every qualified veteran – no matter where they live or how long they are waiting for care – eligible for the Veteran Choice Card

Best-Practices Peer-Review

- Encourage the VA to undergo a best-practices peer-review by some of the best hospital networks in the nation such as the Cleveland Clinic and Mayo Clinic
- Prioritize review of VA hospitals with the longest wait-times or with the worst health outcomes as determined by the VA

Expand Telemedicine at the VA

- Allow VA health care professionals licensed, registered or certified in a state to use telemedicine to provide treatment to veterans in other states

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