

Setting the Record Straight

As the congressionally mandated Commission on Care moves closer to issuing its recommendations for VA reform, due in June, DAV has launched a nationwide campaign to set the record straight about some of the bad proposals that have emerged for changing veterans health care.

Specifically, some politicians, political and veterans groups have supported five changes to the VA health care system that may look good on the surface but could actually harm veterans in the long term: limiting the VA's full-service health system to only a few "Centers of Excellence" focusing on things like post-traumatic stress disorder, burns and amputations; restricting the VA to treating only combat or service-related injuries; turning the VA health care system into merely an insurance company; letting the money follow the veteran using health care cards or vouchers; and privatizing the VA health care system.

DAV's Setting the Record Straight campaign highlights these proposals, illustrating how each of these ideas could potentially have negative consequences for veterans.

For instance, the idea to shrink from the VA's current full continuum care model to "Centers of Excellence" would ultimately mean VA facilities would be located farther apart and in mostly urban areas, forcing hundreds of thousands of veterans to travel longer distances or wait longer to access needed care. The proposal to turn the VA into an insurance program would likely require veterans to shoulder more of the financial costs for their health care in the form of new premiums, copayments and deductibles.

DAV's campaign also proposes solutions that would enhance both access and accountability, such as creating urgent care centers, utilizing more Web-based health and telemedicine

options, and establishing local community care networks between the VA and private providers so veterans can receive high-quality care when and where they need it.

“Yes, we need to improve veterans’ access to health care,” DAV Washington Headquarters Executive Director Garry Augustine said, “but let’s not lose sight of the fact that, according to an independent assessment recently mandated by Congress, quality at VA remains high, performing the same or significantly better than non-VA health care on 12 of 14 measures.”

Find out more about how DAV is setting the record straight and what these proposals for reform could mean for veterans by visiting www.dav.org/operation-keep-promise-2016/.