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VA Community Care contributed more than $44B to local economies in FY 2026

WASHINGTON —The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs today announced it made a record-high $44.8 billion in community care payments to local healthcare providers across the country in fiscal year 2026 under the bipartisan VA MISSION Act. That's an increase of more than $7 billion from fiscal year 2025 and more than $11 billion from FY 2024, the last full fiscal year under the Biden Administration.

President Trump signed the MISSION Act in 2018 after it passed Congress with widespread bipartisan support. The law created a benefit that lets eligible Veterans choose care from authorized local, non-VA healthcare providers at VA expense. VA pays for that care under the Veterans Community Care Program, which is the fourth largest healthcare payer program in America and provides healthcare services supporting more than 9 million enrolled Veterans.

"The bipartisan MISSION Act gave eligible Veterans the choice to get their healthcare when and where it's best for them — whether at a VA facility or a community provider," said **VA Secretary Doug Collins**. "Under President Trump, we're working every day to provide Veterans with the healthcare choices Congress guaranteed them."

With the enactment of the bipartisan Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act in 2025, Congress reaffirmed its commitment to healthcare choice by requiring VA to ensure that Veterans and their referring clinicians can choose community care without any additional review when it's in the Veteran's best medical interest. Under current law, Veterans can also choose community care in other circumstances, including if their average driving time or wait time exceeds certain thresholds or when they need a service that is not provided by VA.

While community care is an important option for many Veterans, VA is also spending record amounts of funding to support direct care, including a record high $116.7 billion in FY 2026.

Federal healthcare payer programs — like the Veterans Community Care Program, Medicare, Medicaid and TRICARE — are critical to the operation of every healthcare system in the country and help ensure patients get the care they need. That is especially true in rural areas, where millions of America's Veterans live. Rural healthcare providers sometimes operate on margins of less than 1%, which means VA community care payments help ensure these providers remain open and able to care for Veterans, their families and others in the community.

Providing Veterans the ability to receive care from non-VA healthcare providers at VA expense has widespread bipartisan support. A March 2026 survey from Rasmussen Reports found that 90% of likely military voters support the policy.

In FY 2026, the top ten states that benefited from VA community care were:

- Texas, $4.1 billion
- Florida, $3.6 billion
- California, $2.5 billion
- North Carolina, $1.9 billion
- Ohio, $1.6 billion
- Tennessee, $1.5 billion
- Pennsylvania, $1.5 billion
- Georgia, $1.4 billion
- Arizona, $1.3 billion
- Michigan, $1.3 billion

See the full list of states here.

Of the total $44.8 billion spent on community care payments in FY2026, $31.2 billion went to hospitals and physicians, $6.2 billion went to home based care providers, $5.4 billion went to state and community nursing homes, and $2 billion went to community dental care providers.

Under the second Trump Administration, VA continues to make major improvements in the way care and benefits are being delivered to Veterans, including:

- Enrolling more than 330,000 new Veterans in VA healthcare in 2026.
- Opening 47 new VA healthcare facilities, expanding healthcare access for Veterans around the country.
- Completing a record-high 82.7 million direct care appointments in FY 2026, a 4.9% increase from FY 2024.
- Completing a record-high 68.1 million community care appointments in FY 2026, a 26.7% increase from FY 2024.
- Offering Veterans more than 3.5 million appointments outside of normal operating hours, giving Veterans more timely and convenient options for care.

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