

**Fiscal:** No Fiscal Impact

**Revenue:** No Revenue Impact

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**Action Date:** 04/07/15

**Action:** Be Adopted.

**Meeting Dates:** 03/31, 04/07

**Vote:**

Yeas: 4 - Boquist, Monnes Anderson, Olsen, President Courtney

**Prepared By:** Cheyenne Ross, Committee Administrator

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**WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:**

Urges Congress to improve delivery of care to rural veterans.

**ISSUES DISCUSSED:**

- Ongoing concerns involving federal Veterans Administration (VA) service delivery
- Bureaucracy itself a barrier to care
- Significant delays at Phoenix, Arizona VA medical facility
- Impact of 40 mile rule on ability of rural veterans to seek care elsewhere
- Overmedication and overreliance on opiates for pain management

**EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:**

No amendment.

**BACKGROUND:**

A high percentage of veterans live in rural areas. The Veterans Health Administration's Office of Rural Health was created in 2007 to better serve them, but improvements have been slow and inconsistent, as the Veterans Administration deals with ongoing scandals.

Senate Joint Memorial 11 urges Congress to get behind the mission of the Office of Rural Health: accelerate the pace of improvements, eliminate inefficiencies and barriers and make care accessible to rural veterans.