

**Enrolled**  
**House Joint Memorial 14**

Sponsored by Representative BUEHLER, Senator KNOPP, Representative WHISNANT, Senator OLSEN; Representatives BOONE, EVANS, LIVELY, MCLANE, Senator DEVLIN

To the President of the United States, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled:

We, your memorialists, the Seventy-eighth Legislative Assembly of the State of Oregon, in legislative session assembled, respectfully represent as follows:

Whereas the State of Oregon should ensure access to timely and quality health care for Oregon veterans no matter where they live; and

Whereas rural veterans often have to drive several hours, sometimes in hazardous road conditions, to receive medically necessary treatment or procedures from Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical centers; and

Whereas the VA has implemented two new temporary nationwide programs, the Patient-Centered Community Care (PC3) program and the VA Choice Program, funded at \$19.8 billion and aimed at improving veterans' access to health care by using local non-VA providers rather than distant VA treatment resources; and

Whereas health care providers and veterans in central Oregon had been calling for a program similar to PC3 seven years ago; and

Whereas PC3 was initiated in September 2013 and has now been operating for around 18 months, enrolling providers and patients in the program; and

Whereas veterans are experiencing great difficulty in utilizing PC3 and the VA Choice Program because of a lack of easily accessible information, inconsistent VA interpretation of rules, VA facility criteria regarding VA Choice Program eligibility and confusion caused by the VA's narrow definitions of driving distance; and

Whereas the VA is not providing veterans, health care providers and taxpayers with cost and performance data on PC3 and VA Choice Program implementation that would allow evaluation of the performance of the programs against their stated goals such as veteran and non-VA provider enrollment, referrals to non-VA providers, waiting times, quality of care and funding; and

Whereas PC3 and the VA Choice Program are the current major VA programs aimed at raising the expectations of veterans and non-VA providers that veterans can receive timely quality care near their residences; and

Whereas the VA and Congress have not defined the future of PC3 and the VA Choice Program beyond their temporary time frames; and

Whereas PC3 and the VA Choice Program have the potential to achieve significant improvements in timeliness and quality of health care provided to rural and other qualified veterans; and

Whereas the VA and Congress should establish a goal of consolidating PC3 and the VA Choice Program into a permanent program; and

Whereas Congress should not allow the VA to divert funds from PC3 and the VA Choice Program to in-house VA programs; and

Whereas there are approximately 22 million veterans living today, 5.3 million of whom live in rural areas; and

Whereas 3.2 million veterans who live in rural areas are enrolled in the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) health care system; and

Whereas 2.6 million patients enrolled in the VHA health care system have a service-connected disability; and

Whereas 960,000 veterans from rural areas have a service-connected disability; and  
Whereas a disproportionate number of all service members are from rural areas; and  
Whereas many veterans from rural areas return to their rural communities after their service period; now, therefore,

**Be It Resolved by the Legislative Assembly of the State of Oregon:**

That we, the members of the Seventy-eighth Legislative Assembly, respectfully urge the Congress of the United States of America to support the mission of the Veterans Health Administration Office of Rural Health and efforts to improve access to health care for veterans in rural areas; and be it further

Resolved, That we urge Congress to improve, support and accelerate outreach efforts to bring health care to veterans in rural areas; and be it further

Resolved, That we respectfully request that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs make public information on the Patient-Centered Community Care program and the Department of Veterans Affairs Choice Program, including data on the effectiveness of the programs and the number of veterans served by the programs; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this memorial shall be sent to the President of the United States, to the Senate Majority Leader, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and to each member of the Oregon Congressional Delegation.

---

Adopted by House May 6, 2015

---

Timothy G. Sekerak, Chief Clerk of House

---

Tina Kotek, Speaker of House

Adopted by Senate June 1, 2015

---

Peter Courtney, President of Senate