

IAVA Issues Statement on VA Veterans Choice Program

New York, NY (November 5, 2014) – As part of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Veterans Choice Program, the VA began to issue “Veteran Choice Cards” today to veterans. Congress approved the Choice Program this summer under the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act. According to the VA, the Choice Card allows veterans to choose to receive care outside of VA when they qualify for the new program based on the distance of their residence from a VA care facility, or when wait times for VA health care exceed the standards established in law.

IAVA CEO and Founder released the following statement:

“IAVA is disappointed by the department’s failure to fully implement the Choice Card program by the law’s deadline of Nov. 5, 2014. This is another fumbled opportunity to deliver for our nation’s veterans or be fully transparent about an inability to do so. While we cannot excuse this latest misstep, we agree that the priority groups the VA has created for tiered distribution after the deadline are reasonable under the circumstances.”

Rieckhoff added: “As the VA moves forward with full implementation of the law in 2015 and beyond, we would encourage the department’s leadership to continue expanding private and community partner options available to veterans for using the benefit beyond the two existing contracts, in line with clear legislative intent. We also encourage them to closely monitor quality of service and patient satisfaction across all platforms of care.”