



The Honorable Phil Roe
Chairman
U.S. House Committee on Veterans Affairs
336 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Tim Walz
Ranking Member
U.S. House Committee on Veterans Affairs
2313 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Roe and Ranking Member Walz,

On behalf of the National Association of Counties (NACo) and the 3,069 counties we represent, we respectfully ask the U.S. House Committee on Veterans Affairs to support measures in the VA Maintaining Systems and Strengthening Integrated Outside Networks (VA MISSION) Act of 2018 ([H.R. 5674](#)) that would expand the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Comprehensive Program of Assistance for Family Caregivers and ensure that reimbursements from the VA to non-VA care providers for care provided to eligible veterans are disbursed in a timely manner.

America's counties have long called on Congress to fully fund veterans services, particularly those that allow counties to be reimbursed for care provided to VA-eligible veterans at community based, non-VA medical facilities. Under the current Veterans Choice Program, non-VA health care providers may be reimbursed for health care services provided to veterans that are otherwise eligible for VA care. However, in many cases, reimbursements to non-VA care providers have not been processed in a timely manner, leading to interruptions in care and financial uncertainty for both providers and veterans.

Additionally, NACo asks the Committee to support language in the VA MISSION Act of 2018 that would expand the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers of the Department of Veterans Affairs and enhance compensation for servicemembers or veterans who require assistance in everyday life.

Family caregivers offer support to veterans who need assistance due to injuries sustained or aggravated in the line of active duty in military service. The ability of family caregivers to provide support for veterans in their own homes offers many veterans an alternative to institutionalized care and can help reduce the costs associated with providing health care and other services to our nation's veterans. Further, by allowing the VA to contract with and compensate other federal agencies, states, non-profits and other entities to provide supportive services for family caregivers, this measure can help reduce costs for counties that provide such services.

Counties invest over \$80 billion in community health and \$58 billion annually in human services for our residents, including millions of veterans and their families. NACo applauds the inclusion of these two measures in the VA MISSION Act of 2018, which would bolster support and improve services for veteran family caregivers, help reduce costs for counties and local taxpayers, and ensure that counties are promptly reimbursed for the health care services we provide to eligible veterans. We urge the U.S.

House Committee on Veterans Affairs to support these provisions as the committee marks up and considers the VA MISSION Act of 2018.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matthew D. Chase". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping initial "M".

Matthew D. Chase
Executive Director
National Association of Counties