

Veterans' Assuring Critical Care Expansion To Support Servicemembers (ACCESS) Act

(H.R. 740 / S. 275)



VETERANS SHOULDN'T HAVE TO WAIT

Timely Mental Health Care Saves Lives

More than nine million veterans are enrolled to receive Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care, including nearly 2 million who rely on its mental health services. Residential Rehabilitation and Treatment Programs (RRTPs) offer vital support for veterans managing complex mental health and substance use challenges. However, delays and unclear access to these programs can worsen symptoms, increase risk of crisis, and lead some veterans to give up seeking care.

★ THE ISSUE:

Inconsistent Access to RRTPs

- ✓ VA is obligated to provide timely access to outpatient mental health care, but RRTPs are not covered by the VA MISSION Act standards that apply to most health care services.
- ✓ Veterans seeking RRTP care face unpredictable wait times and no guaranteed community care options if VA facilities are full or far away.
- ✓ Delays and lack of transparency in RRTP admissions can worsen veterans' conditions and discourage them from pursuing necessary treatment.

FAST FACTS: RESIDENTIAL MENTAL HEALTH CARE FOR VETERANS



Over 97% of RRTP patients had a substance use disorder diagnosis, with 92% also having co-occurring mental health conditions.



There are approximately 260 RRTPs across 125 locations, offering about 6,600 beds nationwide (as of March 2025).



70% of veterans were admitted to RRTP care within 20 days during the first quarter of fiscal year 2025.

★ THE SOLUTION:

Advance the Veterans' Assuring Critical Care Expansion To Support Servicemembers (ACCESS) Act (H.R. 740 / S. 275)

Original Sponsors:

Rep. Mike Bost (R-IL-12), Sen. Jerry Moran (R-KS)

- **Speeds up admissions:** Requires VA to screen veterans within 48 hours and admit priority cases promptly, applying VA MISSION Act standards for routine admissions.
- **Considers critical risk factors:** Ensures screening includes evaluation of suicide risk, unsafe living conditions, and other urgent concerns.
- **Improves care quality and coordination:** Sets accreditation standards for community-based RRTP providers and strengthens VA care coordination after treatment.

Key Distinctions to Remember:

This is NOT a step toward VA privatization: RRTPs served about 32,000 veterans in FY24, but on any given day, around 1,600 veterans were waiting for care. This level of support is a critical intervention for veterans who should not have to wait if care is available.

This RRTP solution is one section of a larger health care bill: The bill includes other notable provisions, like a three-year pilot at five sites that lets veterans self-schedule outpatient mental health appointments with VA community care providers.

★ Delays in accessing critical RRTP care put veterans at risk of worsening mental health and increased crises.

Wounded Warrior Project® urges Congress to advance the Veterans' ACCESS Act (H.R. 740 / S. 275) to ensure timely, coordinated care that helps veterans stabilize, recover, and reclaim their lives.