

Veterans Choice Program

Improving Access to Care for America's Veterans

TriWest Healthcare Alliance strives to be “the answer” in support of VA when it is unable to directly meet the health care needs of the Veterans it serves. TriWest continues to respond to the increasing demand for community care to meet the needs of both VA and our nation's Veterans.

The Veterans Choice program is working, but it must work even better and faster. TriWest is now scheduling about 100,000 Choice appointments per month in its 28 state region, up from 2,000 per month in January 2015, a dramatic 4900% increase in just over a year. TriWest is slated to handle 1 million calls in March 2016, a dramatic climb from the 200,000 it handled in January 2015. Average speed to answer is 16 seconds and the abandonment rate is an industry leading 2%. This is made possible by the growth to 10 operational sites since July 2015, with the latest opening in El Paso on March 18.

The fundamental issue that caused the access crisis – the inability to meet growing demand and provide timely appointments within the VA system of care – remains the case today. TriWest is working diligently and in good faith to meet that growing demand with proven local providers under the Choice Act.

VA will serve our nation's Veterans better and faster in the Choice Program as more health care providers are signed up in our TriWest-built network. The TriWest provider network is tailored to the demand profile of the local VA Medical Centers and now stands at nearly 180,000 providers, including about 78,000 primary care and 20,000 mental health providers. Only 1% of appointments in the community need to go “non-network” with only 25-35 Veterans being returned a day for “no provider”. TriWest has seen significant growth in total authorizations by specialty, as the access to and awareness of the Choice Program has expanded.

The Veterans Choice Program only works if it has strong participation from local providers who are reimbursed by the government in a timely manner for the service they provide to Veterans. TriWest has implemented a new program (Provider 2.0) that will make it easier for providers to participate and get paid for the services they render under the Veterans Choice Program. TriWest's provider payment rate is greater than 97% of clean claims paid in 30 days.

While the Veterans Choice Program is beginning to improve, real challenges remain that require VA, TriWest and Congress to continue to work together to serve our nation's Veterans and put the program on a long-term path for success.

For more information on TriWest and the Veterans Choice Program, visit: TriWest.com.

MARCH 2016