

## Sen. Franken Says Senate-Passed Bill Will Expand Accountability for VA Officials, Bolster Health Care Options for Veterans

Senator Backs Measure to Help Fix Systemic Problems that Have Forced Long Waits for VA Care

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Photo: [http://www.franken.senate.gov/files/images/Feature\\_Soldier.jpg](http://www.franken.senate.gov/files/images/Feature_Soldier.jpg)

Sen. Al Franken praised the Senate passage of a bipartisan measure that will give veterans in Minnesota and across the country more non-VA health care options and address the systemic problems that have forced long waits for care at VA facilities. [Click here to read more.](#)

U.S. Sen. Al Franken (D-Minn.) praised the Senate passage of a bipartisan measure—which he cosponsored—that will give veterans in Minnesota and across the country more non-VA health care options and address the systemic problems that have forced long waits for care at Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) facilities.

The bill, passed Wednesday, would let VA hospitals hire more medical professionals, expand access to care at non-VA facilities, make greater use of telemedicine, and pay to lease 26 new medical facilities across the country to help deal with the surge of veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan who need care. It would also improve accountability at the VA by making it easier to fire or demote VA officials who perform poorly.

"This measure will help ensure that veterans in Minnesota and across the country get the medical care they have earned and deserve without having to endure months and months of waiting," Sen. Franken said. "It also will ensure accountability for VA officials to reassure veterans and their families who have had their faith in the VA shaken by recent scandals. Now I hope we can quickly get a final agreement on the legislation with the House and get this measure enacted so veterans are no longer forced to wait for care."

Sen. Franken has long been focused on making sure veterans have access to timely health care through the VA, and has introduced legislation to address the problem. Along with Sen. John Boozman (R-Ark.), Sen. Franken introduced the bipartisan Rural Veterans Health Care Improvement Act, which would push the VA to do better strategic planning for providing access to health care for veterans in rural areas. Sen. Franken also introduced the Quicker Benefits Delivery Act with Congressman Tim Walz (D-Minn.), which would help get benefits into the hands of veterans more quickly and help reduce the VA backlog, which resulted in hundreds of thousands of vets waiting for months to have their claims processed.