

Nolan Votes to Expand Veterans' Access to Local Health Care

Jun 10, 2014

Bill requires the VA to offer outside care to veterans who live more than 40 miles from a VA medical facility

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) – U.S. Rep. Rick Nolan today joined Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle in voting to increase rural veterans' access to quality and timely health care close to home.

The Veterans Access to Care Act (H.R.4810), which passed the House unanimously, requires the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to offer non-VA care at the department's expense to any enrolled veteran who lives more than 40 miles from a VA medical facility, or who cannot get an appointment within VA wait time goals.

Said Nolan, "This bill cuts back on difficult and lengthy travel time vets living in rural areas are forced to make to faraway VA clinics, enables these rural vets to visit their local doctor, and makes progress toward reducing the huge backlog in claims processing at the VA that has notoriously and shamefully forced veterans to wait months or even years for benefits they've earned fighting for this nation."

"What's more, this bill saves taxpayer money by saving veterans from having to file reimbursement expenses after a long trip to their nearest VA," Nolan continued.

Nolan added that after numerous meetings with veterans in the Eighth District, including his recent public round table with local veterans at the Duluth Vet Center, it's clear to him that "we need to make immediate changes to the way Veterans Affairs delivers services to our nation's heroes."

The Veterans Access to Care Act complements another bill Rep. Nolan supported, the VA Management Accountability Act (H.R.4031), which would give the Secretary of the VA the power to fire VA executives who have failed performance standards. H.R.4031 passed the U.S. House of Representatives 390-33 and is awaiting action in the Senate.