

VAU.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Fact Sheet

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VA Appointment Wait Times and Data Reporting April 6, 2015

Background:

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is committed to delivering timely and high-quality health care to our Nation's Veterans, and rebuilding the trust of those Veterans, their families and the American people. Our focus is on what is best for the Veteran.

VA is making progress to ensure Veterans receive the care they need, when they need it, and where they want to be seen. We know we still have too many Veterans waiting for care when they desire it. We are committed to getting it right and providing the timely care Veterans have earned and deserve.

Key Facts:

- VA completed 97 percent of appointments in February 2015 within 30 days of the Veteran's preferred date.
- Nationally, VA completed more than 46 million appointments between May 1, 2014 and February 28, 2015. This represents an increase of 2 million more appointments than were completed during the same time period in 2013.
- The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) began [publicly posting patient access data](#) online in June 2014.
- Based on the Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act of 2014 (Choice Act), VA introduced a [new system](#) for calculating Veteran appointment wait times last fall. The system measures average wait times based on "preferred date," which is either the day the Veteran wishes to be seen, or the day determined to be medically necessary by their care provider.
- VA regularly updates Congressional stakeholders and Veteran Service Organizations on how we measure access data and wait times.
- VA reports average appointment wait times in two categories: **completed** and **pending**. Both of these measures are determined based on the Veteran's preferred appointment date, and VA considers completed appointment data to be the best indicator of the Veteran's actual wait time experience.
- Delays are calculated by measuring the time that elapsed between the preferred date and the date when the patient can get an appointment. Previously, wait-times for new patients had been calculated based on when a scheduler created the appointment in the scheduling system, not when the patient needed or wanted to be seen by the physician.
- As part of VA's Accelerating Access Initiative, health care sites across VA have added extra clinic hours and are working to increase space using leasing and short- and long-term construction planning for needed clinic space.

- VA completed approximately 1.5 million appointments per month in private sector care (unrelated to Choice Act) in the community, which represents nearly 20 percent of total appointments.
- VA has completed 12 million same-day appointments, which is 20 percent of VA's total appointments per year.

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