

HCR7, As Adopted by Senate, January 13, 2016

Substitute for House Concurrent Resolution No. 7.

A concurrent resolution to urge the United States Department of Veterans Affairs and the United States Congress to create a pilot program in Michigan instituting a flexible Veterans Choice Card system structured similar to a traditional health care program for all veterans in Michigan.

Whereas, The men and women who serve our country deserve our utmost respect and appreciation. Many of them are injured in the line of duty and come home to face challenging physical disabilities and other health issues. All veterans are entitled to the best health care we can give them; and

Whereas, According to the U.S. Government Accountability Office, several variables affect a veteran's ability to access VA health care. Veterans may have difficulty travelling to a distant facility for care or be unable to secure an appointment in an acceptable period of time to deal quickly with a medical issue; and

Whereas, To provide a more flexible VA health care system, Congress enacted the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014, allowing for care outside of the traditional VA system. Under the act, the new *Choice Program* will provide many veterans with VA compensated health care at a non-VA center, providing more timely appointments, less bureaucratic red tape, and easier travel; and

Whereas, As currently structured, the *Choice Program* limits non-VA health care to veterans residing more than 40 miles from a VA health facility. The law does not differentiate between types of VA health care facilities. Therefore, a veteran living near a small VA clinic but needing specialty cardiology care at a VA facility 100 miles away will not be allowed to access private cardiology care. Also, the program requires that every appointment for care be cleared by a program manager; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That we urge the United States Department of Veterans Affairs and the United States Congress to create a pilot program in Michigan instituting a flexible Veterans Choice Card system structured similar to a traditional health care program for all veterans in Michigan; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the members of the Michigan congressional delegation, and the United States Secretary of Veterans Affairs.