

November OCC 2022 Legislative Affairs Liaison Update

The VA's Progress:

The November's report is a continuation of the October report on Legislative Progress. This report focuses on how the Veterans Administration (VA) is progressing.

MOAA commends VA's continued prioritization of providing age-friendly care and the department's emphasis on aging in place for veterans. However, current expansion efforts continue to lag behind demand, and programs and services vary significantly across the system. The VA started its large five-year expansion plan in June to increase evidenced-based Home and Community-Based care Services (HCBS). The expansion includes 203 HCBS programs with veteran-directed care and medical foster home care to be available across all VA medical centers by FY 2026.

MOAA-Backed Legislation: The following bills vary in scope, but in the aggregate, they would allow the VA to provide a wider range of programs and services and increase access so veterans can get the care they need: Elizabeth Dole Home and Community Based Services for Veterans and Caregivers Act (H.R. 6823/S. 3854). Also known as the Elizabeth Dole Home Care Act, the bill will improve HCBS for veterans and their caregivers transitioning between VA caregiver support programs; establish a needs assessment tool; expand mental health and support services for caregivers; and enhance communication and coordination with veterans and their families and veteran service organizations like MOAA, among other improvements. Expanding Veterans' Options for Long-Term Care Act (S. 4169). This bill will require the VA to carry out a pilot program to provide assisted living services to eligible veterans to live more independently and at lower costs to taxpayers. The VA is unable to pay room and board fees at assisted living facilities at present; the department would assess the pilot's effectiveness of paying for assisted living services and veterans' satisfaction with this long-term care option. Long-Term Care Veterans Choice Act (H.R. 7158/S. 2852). Medical foster home care allows veterans to live independently in a group setting with other veterans. This long-term care bill will allow the VA to contract and pay for care currently authorized in law. The measure allows up to 900 veterans with severe service-connected disabilities to live in medical foster homes for a period of five years providing an alternative option to nursing home care.

Please continue to monitor MOAA's Legislative Action page. Our efforts, though individually, are important. Collectively they support MOAA's overall objectives of supporting all of our uniformed services.