



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
VETERANS' AFFAIRS
Chairman Phil Roe, M.D.

H.R. 1005: "To improve the provision of adult day health care services for veterans"

Background:

In 2017, approximately 9.8 million veterans - or, 46 percent of the total veteran population - will be 65 years of age or older. Congress has long recognized the need to ensure appropriate and affordable geriatric and long-term care is available to aging veterans through the VA healthcare system. Accordingly, the Veterans Benefits, Health Care, and Information Technology Act of 2006 required VA to cover the cost of nursing home care in a state veterans home (SVH) for any veteran in need of such care due to a service-connected disability. There is an increasing demand for VA to offer geriatric and long-term care programs for veterans in non-institutional settings that would allow aging veterans to receive the services and support they need to remain in their homes.

Adult Day Health Care (ADHC) programs are a popular alternative to nursing home care that provide veterans in need of supportive services with companionship, peer support, recreation and certain health care services. In testimony before the Subcommittee on Health, the National Association of State Veterans Homes claimed that, "there are a number of State Homes across the country interested in providing medical model ADHC services; however the current basic ADHC per diem [paid to the SVH by VA] is not nearly sufficient for most state homes to be cover the costs of this program." As a result, only three SVHs out of 153 SVHs nationwide provide ADHC programs.

H.R. 1005 would direct VA to enter into an agreement or a contract with state veterans homes to pay for adult day health care for a veteran eligible for, but not receiving, nursing home care. This bill would stipulate that payment under each agreement or contract between VA and a state home must equal 65% of the payment that VA would otherwise pay to the state home if the veteran were receiving nursing home care.

The Message:

- Our country has made a promise to take care of our veterans throughout the course of their lives.
- Adult day health care programs are an alternative to nursing home care that provide aging veterans with companionship and care.
- This bill would increase access to adult day health care for veterans eligible for nursing home care.
- Expanding access to adult day health care would allow veterans who qualify for more costly VA-paid nursing home care the ability to stay at home longer.