



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

H.R. 476: The VA Scheduling Accountability Act

Background:

In 2010, the Veterans Health Administration established a policy for scheduling outpatient clinic appointments and for ensuring the competency of staff involved in the scheduling process. As a part of the directive, facility directors were required to annually certify full compliance with the scheduling policy. In May 2013, a senior VA official waved the requirement to annually recertify compliance with the directive.

Subsequently, in April 2014, the Committee uncovered the use of unauthorized waiting lists at the Phoenix VA Health Care System in Phoenix, Arizona. This revelation – and the investigations that resulted from it – found that no less than 40 veterans died while on these waiting lists and led to a widespread, systemic access and accountability scandal. Though VA has since reinstated the certification requirement, non-compliance with VA's scheduling policies was a primary factor behind the 2014 crisis regarding access to care, the repercussions of which continue today.

H.R. 476 would require VA medical center directors to certify annually that their facility is in compliance with the scheduling directive (or any successor directive that replaces it), prohibit VA from waiving certification and require VA to report to Congress on individual medical facilities' compliance. The bill would also prohibit VA medical center leaders from receiving awards or bonuses if their VA medical center fails to certify compliance with the scheduling directive.

The Message:

- All veterans deserve timely access to quality health care.
- Lack of oversight of scheduling policies contributed to VA's delays in care scandal, where veterans died waiting for care.
- This bill would require that all facilities comply with VA's scheduling policies.