WAIT TIMES FOR VETERANS STILL TOO LONG IN MANY AREAS

Even after $16.3B to shorten waits, >890,000 appointments were not scheduled within 30 days

“We are doing a whole series of things - the right things, I believe - to deal with the immediate issue. But we need an intermediate term plan that moves us ahead a quantum leap, so that we don’t continue over the next three or four years just trying to stay up. We’ve got to get ahead of demand.”
- Sloan Gibson, Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs

**Problem**
Veterans waiting too long for treatment
Issues identified in early 2014
Underserved areas having ongoing issues
Veterans Administration (VA) clinics, hospitals
Veterans seeking appointments

**Cause Mapping**
Causes and effects related to the problem of veterans waiting too long for treatment.

1. **Problem**
   - Problem(s): Veterans waiting too long for treatment
   - Date: Issues identified in early 2014
   - Facility, site: Underserved areas having ongoing issues
   - Unit, area, equipment: Veterans Administration (VA) clinics, hospitals
   - Task being performed: Veterans seeking appointments

2. **Analysis**
   - **Potential for serious impact to safety**
   - **Not meeting timeliness goals**
   - **Patients waiting too long for appointments**
   - **Significant time between request & appointment**

   "It's not big enough to accommodate the number of veterans we are seeing or the number of providers we need."
   - Elizabeth Goolsby, Fayetteville VA Hospital Director

   "Today, we serve a population that is older, with more chronic conditions, and less able to afford private sector care."
   - Robert McDonald, Secretary of Veterans Affairs

   "I think what we are seeing is that as we improve access, more veterans are coming."
   - Sloan Gibson Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs

   "Not a lot of medical students want to go work for the VA in a rural community medical clinic."
   - Dr. Kevin Dellsperger, chief medical officer, Georgia Regents Medical Center and former chief of staff at the VA medical center in Iowa City, Iowa

   "They are on the frontier of some of the most medically underserved areas of the country."
   - Dr. William Curry, associate dean for primary care and rural health, University of Alabama School of Medicine

   "There’s more medical care available outside VA facilities." (Goolsby, Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs)

3. **Solutions**
   - **Less able to afford private sector care?**
   - **Improving access?**

   "We are doing a whole series of things - the right things, I believe - to deal with the immediate issue. But we need an intermediate term plan that moves us ahead a quantum leap, so that we don’t continue over the next three or four years just trying to stay up. We’ve got to get ahead of demand.”
   - Sloan Gibson, Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs

   "The contracting and building time in the Department of Veterans Affairs is a lengthy process."
   - Elizabeth Goolsby

   "Not a lot of medical students want to go work for the VA in a rural community medical clinic."
   - Dr. Kevin Dellsperger

   "Even our best demographic models didn’t anticipate the rate at which the growth would occur.”
   - Nick Ross, assistant director for outpatient clinics, VA North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Action Item</th>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>Status-Completed</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Allow vets to be seen outside VA facilities</td>
<td>Inadequate capacity at VA clinics</td>
<td>Implemented November 5, 2014</td>
<td>ID cards mailed in November, but many challenges remain with program</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Building new clinics/hospitals</td>
<td>Lack of physical space</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>IG notes ineffective management of timeliness &amp; cost of new construction</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Opening of new outpatient clinics</td>
<td>Delays in new construction</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Addition of 8,000 employees between August &amp; December 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Add employees</td>
<td>General shortage of medical staff</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>VA has increased salaries since the summer</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Increased salaries</td>
<td>Difficult to recruit to rural, underserved areas</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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