

U.S. Rep. Kind: Votes to protect veterans' access to quality care

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Rep. Kind passes provisions to improve care for Wisconsin veterans and strengthen VA opioid safety

La Crosse – Today, **U.S. Rep. Ron Kind** voted for the bipartisan *VA Maintaining Internal Systems and Strengthening Integrated Outside Networks (MISSION) Act* of 2018. The bill improves and streamlines the VA Choice program, which allows eligible veterans to receive care outside of the VA, by creating the new VA Community Care Program. The bill also expands critical VA opioid safety guidelines that were included in Rep. Kind's *Jason Simcakoski PROMISE Act* that passed in 2016, and gives the VA the authority to bar medical providers from the new community care program if they are using dangerous or abnormal opioid prescribing practices.

It also includes several provisions designed to help recruit doctors to rural and underserved VA medical facilities, by offering scholarships and student loan repayment to doctors who pledge to practice in these VA facilities. Rep. Kind has fought for these kinds of bipartisan proposals to help address staffing shortages at the VA, particularly through his *Veterans Access to Care Act*, which offered these same types of incentives to recruit and retain doctors to rural and underserved VA facilities.

“Our veterans have earned and deserve the best quality healthcare we can provide. They should never face compromised or inadequate care because of staffing shortages or strained resources,” said **Rep. Ron Kind**. “I am proud to vote for this

important bill for Wisconsin veterans, and am pleased to see it includes priorities I have fought to pass.”

Finally, the bill expands the VA’s caregiver program to include veterans of all eras. Currently, this program is limited to post 9/11 era veterans.