

VA commission on care: Eliminate VA medical centers

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(HealthDay)—A radical proposal has been suggested for eliminating all

Veterans Affairs (VA) medical centers and outpatient facilities in the next 20 years, floated by seven of 15 members of the VA Commission on Care, according to an article published in the *Military Times*.

The proposal states that the current VA health care system does not meet the health care needs of veterans and veterans should be able to receive care at any provider that accepts VA payments or Medicare. To encourage doctors to participate, reimbursement rates would be 5 to 10 percent higher than Medicare rates. The recommendations mirror proposals set forth by the veterans advocacy group Concerned Veterans for American in a VA health reform plan introduced last year, which called for consolidating VA medical facilities under a nonprofit organization, and providing care for veterans in the private sector in a program similar to the federal Employees Health Benefit Plan.

Eight veterans organizations sent a letter to the Commission chairwoman denouncing the proposal. They expressed concerns that the document was developed and drafted without input from the other commissioners and without consideration of [veterans](#) who would want to improve and expand the VA [health care](#) system.

"We look forward to working with the commission to come to consensus with good ideas that will help resolve the issues that VA has," said Garry Augustine, executive director of Disabled American Veterans, according to the *Military Times*. "We are not trying to be obstructionist; we are trying to work with the commission. But we are dead-set against getting rid of the VA."

More information: [More Information](#)

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