

# JERRY MORAN

## VA MISSION Act: Update on the Community Care Network Implementation

*Opening Remarks of U.S. Senator Jerry Moran (R-Kan.)*

Wednesday, February 5, 2020 | 9:30 a.m.

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*As Prepared for Delivery:*

Thank you, Dr. Stone, to you and your team for joining us on today's first panel. I would also like to thank the witnesses on the second panel for being with us today.

The delivery of quality and timely health care to veterans has always been a top priority for me. When our servicemembers leave the military, it is our duty to make sure they receive the care they deserve.

Congress enacted the MISSION Act to transform VA health care into an innovative and responsive 21st-century health care system capable of addressing the challenges veterans face today.

Our hearing today will focus on the VA's efforts to deploy the Community Care Network. This network is central to the MISSION's Veterans Community Care Program.

Kansas' Big First Congressional District is as large as the State of Illinois, but lacks a VA Medical Center. For veterans in rural areas in my state, MISSION's Community Care Network is essential for timely healthcare.

The VA recently completed Region 1 deployment of the Network and the first four regions – representing the lower 48 states – are scheduled to be completed by the end of the year.

This committee has concerns about how the VA is building out the network and its ability to meet veteran demand. Under MISSION's expanded eligibility requirements, the number of patients seeking outside care is supposed to increase from 648,000 to 3.7 million.

A recent VA OIG report predicts wait times could worsen once MISSION is in full effect. This is in addition to reports that the VA is still struggling with scheduling delays and paying community providers on time.

We must take the opportunity to learn from Region 1 and have honest conversations about difficulties that could threaten the network ***well before*** it is fully deployed. We owe it to veterans to get MISSION right the first time.

I now turn to the Ranking Member, Senator Tester, for his opening statement.

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