

# Shulkin to VFW: Right Care at the Right Place

**'I believe we need a system that's not based on rules, but is based on your clinical needs.'**

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*This article was written by Megan Maloney and [originally appeared on Vantage Point](#), the official blog of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.*

On Monday, July 24, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. David J. Shulkin addressed an audience of VFW and Auxiliary members at the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) 118th National Convention in New Orleans.

## NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

406 W. 34th Street  
Kansas City, MO 64111  
Office 816.756.3390  
Fax 816.968.1157

## WASHINGTON OFFICE

200 Maryland Ave., N.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20002  
Office 202.543.2239  
Fax 202.543.6719

info@vfw.org  
www.vfw.org



In his remarks, Shulkin spoke on the five key priorities he has identified to transform VA. The first of those five priorities is to give Veterans greater choice.

“When I talk about greater choice, right now we have a system that I would call a rules-based system,” Shulkin said, highlighting how administrative rules, such as how far a Veteran lives from a VA, dictates whether that person can get care in their local community. “I believe we need a system that’s not based on rules, but is based on your clinical needs.”

“We want that clinical flexibility to be able to allow Veterans to be able to get the right care at the right place,” Shulkin told the VFW convention attendees.

The secretary’s comments echoed an editorial that appeared earlier on Monday. [Shulkin wrote in USA Today](#) that community care, or private capacity, and VA’s internal capacity are not mutually exclusive.

“We are ramping up both simultaneously in order to meet the health care needs of the

Veterans we are charged with serving,” [he wrote](#).

VA is embarking on the largest transformation and modernization effort in recent history. Secretary Shulkin recently established the VA Office of Accountability and Whistleblower Protection and [announced that the VA will dispose of 430 vacant buildings in 24 months](#). In June, the [President signed into law the VA Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act](#) and Secretary Shulkin [announced that the VA will adopt a joint electronic health record](#) system integrated across all Department of Defense and VA components.

VFW is a nonprofit Veterans service organization comprised of eligible Veterans and military service members from the active, guard and reserve forces. Today, membership stands at nearly 1.7 million members of the VFW and its Auxiliary.

Watch Secretary Shulkin’s remarks, including more on the top five VA priorities, [here](#).

This player uses the Livestream platform. If you are not able to access the player, you can also [watch the video via VFW’s Facebook page](#).