

# The Elizabeth Dole Home and Community Based Services for Veterans and Caregivers Act of 2022 (H.R. 6823)

**Supporting Organizations:** The Elizabeth Dole Foundation, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Disabled American Veterans, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the National Council on Urban Indian Health, Wounded Warrior Project, National PACE Association, National Association of Counties, the American Legion

## Help Elderly and Disabled Veterans Stay in their Homes

- This legislation would enable veterans to age at home, enjoy a higher quality of life, and support their caregivers. A silver tsunami of aging veterans is approaching. For most, institutional care is unwanted and unnecessary. This would expand VA's Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) to all VA Medical Centers, ensuring all who need home care can receive it.
- Recent changes to the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) have left many veterans and caregivers without critical support services. Expansion of HCBS would fill those service gaps.
- Passing this legislation today helps veterans and their caregivers get the services they need now while also building the infrastructure needed to serve an aging veteran population into the future.
- More broadly, the pandemic revealed the need for expanding HCBS. While legislative efforts to expand these programs for Medicare and Medicaid are ongoing, we can act now to provide these services to our veterans.

**Congressional Action:** An aging generation of veterans, an unsupported caregiver population, and determination to age at home call us to support aging and disabled veterans today. This legislation will:

- Expand access to VA HCBS to all Medical Centers in two years.
  - The Veteran Directed Care Program –Provides veterans a flexible budget to hire friends, family, and neighbors to help with activities of daily living.
  - The Home Maker Home Health Aide Program – VA contracts with a community partner that employs home health aides to care for veterans in their homes.
  - The Home-Based Primary Care Program – For a veteran who has difficulty traveling, is isolated, or whose caregiver is burdened, a VA physician will supervise healthcare in the veteran's home.
  - The Purchased Skilled Home Care Program -- For veterans who have higher levels of need the VA contracts with a community agency to provide skilled nursing care in a veteran's home.
  - *A veteran will be eligible for participation in these programs if such a program is determined to be medically necessary to promote, preserve or restore the health of a veteran and the veteran is at risk of hospitalization, nursing home placement or emergency room care.*
- Mandates coordination between PCAFC and VA's HCBS. If a veteran is denied or discharged from the PCAFC the veteran will be assessed for participation in all other HCBS programs.
- Expands access to respite care for family caregivers of veterans enrolled in home care programs.
- Establishes a "one stop shop" webpage to centralize information for families and veterans on all programs and includes an informational eligibility assessment tool.
- Establishes a three-year pilot program to address shortages of home health aides. VA will directly hire or repurpose current nursing assistants to be home health aides for veterans.
- Requires VA make the Veteran Directed Care and Homemaker Home Health Aide programs available in the territories and to Native veterans using IHS, tribal, or urban Indian health organizations.