

# Lawmaker looks outside VA to fill mental care gap

January 29 2013, by Kevin Freking

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(AP)—The head of the House panel that oversees veterans' issues says patients who have trouble getting timely mental health care from Veterans Affairs hospitals and clinics should have another option: access to the thousands of health care providers who care for military personnel and their families.

The proposal by Rep. Jeff Miller, R-Fla., borrows from the playbook of Republican Mitt Romney. He raised the idea of tapping into the military's Tricare network of providers during the presidential campaign.

Miller said the proposal would double overnight the number of psychologists and psychiatrists available to veterans who need [mental health treatment](#).

Some veterans groups and a key senator say they're open to exploring the idea. However, they are wary of undercutting a VA system that health experts agree provides quality care.

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Citation: Lawmaker looks outside VA to fill mental care gap (2013, January 29) retrieved 13 July 2023 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2013-01-lawmaker-va-mental-gap.html>

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