

# Wait times have improved in VA health care system

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(HealthDay)—From 2014 to 2017, there were improvements in wait

times in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care system, resulting in reduced wait times versus the private sector (PS) in 2017, according to a study published online Jan. 18 in *JAMA Network Open*.

Madeline Penn, from the Department of Veterans Affairs in Washington, D.C., and colleagues conducted a retrospective cross-sectional study of new appointment wait times for primary care, dermatology, cardiology, or orthopedics at VA medical centers in 15 metropolitan areas during 2014 to 2017.

The researchers found that the overall mean VA wait times for new appointments were similar compared with wait times in the PS in 2014 (mean wait time, 22.5 versus 18.7 days;  $P = 0.20$ ), with similar wait times across specialties and regions. The overall wait times for new appointments were shorter in the VA than in the PS in 2017 (mean, 17.7 versus 29.8 days;  $P$  primary care (mean 20.0 versus 40.7 days;  $P = 0.005$ ), dermatology (mean, 15.6 versus 32.6 days;  $P$  "Although the results reflect positively on the VA, we intend to continue improving [wait times](#), the accuracy of the data captured, and the transparency of reporting information to veterans and the public," the authors write.

**More information:** [Abstract/Full Text](#)  
[Editorial](#)

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