

## 7/31/2003 Moran Announces Veterans Eligible for Prescription Drug Benefit

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#### Thousands of Veterans Now Able to Fill Prescriptions Written by Non-VA Physicians

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congressman Jerry Moran today announced that qualified Kansas veterans will soon be able to receive medication, prescribed by private doctors, through Veteran Affairs (VA) pharmacies. Under the previous system, veterans were required to see a VA doctor in order to have prescriptions filled by VA pharmacies. About 200,000 American veterans will be eligible for the new benefit.

"By allowing veterans to go to their regular doctors to get prescriptions, they will be able to obtain the medication they need without having to wait," Moran said. "Though this only includes a small number of veterans initially, it is progress and an improvement in efficiency which will reduce the waiting lists for all veterans."

To be eligible for the new benefit, veterans must have enrolled in VA health care and requested their first primary care appointment with the VA by July 25th. They must also have been waiting more than 30 days for their first appointment with a primary care doctor as of September 22nd - the day the first prescriptions will be filled.

In recent years, some veterans have been waiting six months or more to see a doctor, due to increased enrollment.

"Although Congress has passed record high VA budgets for four years in a row, veterans still face unacceptable waiting times at VA health care facilities," Moran said. "This new rule will improve access to prescription medication for our

veterans."

Veterans covered by the new proposal will receive information by mail from their nearest VA medical facility, including information for the doctors themselves.

This new proposal is based on legislation sponsored by Moran, to allow VA pharmacies to dispense medications to veterans for prescriptions written by private physicians. In March, the House Veterans Affairs Health Subcommittee held a hearing on the pharmaceutical services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs, which included testimony on this legislative proposal.

Moran serves as Vice-Chairman of the Health Subcommittee.

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