



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
VETERANS' AFFAIRS
Chairman Phil Roe, M.D.

H.R. 1133: Veterans Transplant Coverage Act

Background:

Under current policy, VA generally requires organ transplants to be performed at one of the department's 13 transplant centers, where waiting times for transplants are on average 32 percent longer than those at non-VA facilities. Furthermore, there have been instances of veterans who have been denied transplant care because a live donor was ineligible for VA health care.

For example, in 2016, a 100% service-connected Army veteran named Charles Nelson was told by VA that he would be able to receive a transplanted kidney from his son locally at the University Hospital in San Antonio via the Choice program. However, VA later said that Mr. Nelson would not be able to use Choice for his transplant care because his son was not a veteran and, therefore, VA was unable to use Choice funds to cover the cost of his care. Mr. Nelson eventually received his transplant outside of VA.

H.R. 1133, as amended, would amend the Choice program to authorize VA to provide all care and services needed for a veteran to receive an organ transplant from a live donor, regardless of whether the donor is eligible for VA health care.

The Message:

- Arcane rules should not prohibit veterans from receiving lifesaving care such as an organ transplant.
- If a veteran is in need of an organ transplant and does not live near a VA transplant center, they should be able to seek transplant care in the community.
- This bill would authorize VA to provide all care and services needed for a veteran to receive an organ transplant from a live donor, regardless of whether the donor is a veteran or the facility is a VA facility.