

VA to Accept Advice from Technology Task Force on Scheduling System

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Part of the recently enacted Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 requires VA to listen to advice from a technology task force regarding their medical appointment scheduling system.

In June, a bipartisan group of senators supported the idea of allowing contractors to perform pro bono work for VA on the scheduling system. Similar efforts were successful for work at Arlington National Cemetery where a consortium of Northern Virginia Technology Council (NVTC) companies banded together to modernize records processing.

Another NVTC team, including Booz Allen Hamilton, HP, IBM, MITRE Corporation and SAIC, will assess VA's scheduling system and offer findings by late September. The legislation requires a review within 45 days of the law's enactment on August 7th.

VA is in the process of replacing its current scheduling system with a COTS solution. The RFP for the Medical Appointment Scheduling System (MASS) is expected out later this month with proposals due 30 days following. A draft Performance Work Statement (PWS) was released on Sept. 17th with responses due Sept. 26th.

Due to the pending scheduling system procurement, the technology task force plans to concentrate on medical facility patient scheduling processes and systems rather than software. "Our assessment will not include recommendations about specific technology products," stated NVTC President Bobbie Kilberg in an interview with FCW.

VA will not be required to adopt all of the task force recommendations. The law stipulates that the VA implement recommendations they consider "feasible, advisable, and cost effective."