



Dear Alaskan,

As an officer in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve, and as someone who has personally witnessed the struggles that some of our servicemen and women undergo as they search for care, I'm working relentlessly to make sure our veterans get the care they need and have earned.

As a member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee (SVAC) and the Republican co-chair of the Congressional Veterans Jobs Caucus, I have worked to pass laws that give the VA more flexibility to remove employees who aren't doing their jobs, modernize the outdated benefits claims appeals process, and expand G.I. benefits for our veterans.

I'll continue to fight to pass these much-needed modernization bills in the Senate, but my colleagues on SVAC and I know our jobs don't end there. Now, more than ever, we need to make sure that the VA successfully implements the legislation Congress has passed. As we move into the future, I'll continue to rely on your suggestions on ways Washington can best serve you and your fellow veterans.

*Dan Sulli*  
U.S. Senator Dan Sullivan

## Serving You

I have a team of friendly, knowledgeable representatives who have a track-record of resolving significant issues for veterans, making sure you and your family receive the benefits you have earned and deserve.

My staff have helped veterans obtain DD-214s, get claims expedited in urgent circumstances, and resolve billing issues. In one notable case, we secured awards and medals for a veteran who had earned but never received them. In another, an expedited retroactive payment helped a veteran save his home. These are just a few examples of the assistance my staff provide on a daily basis.

If you ever have a challenge or issue, I encourage you to reach out to us at any of our regional offices below. We are eager and ready to help.

Never forget, we work for **you**.

### OFFICE LOCATIONS

#### WASHINGTON, DC

302 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510  
202.224.3004

#### JUNEAU

800 Glacier Avenue, Suite 101  
Juneau, AK 99801  
907.586.7277

#### MAT-SU VALLEY

851 E. Westpoint Drive, Suite 309  
Wasilla, AK 99654  
907.357.9956

#### KENAI PENINSULA

44539 Sterling Highway, Suite 204  
Soldotna, AK 99669  
907.262.4040

#### ANCHORAGE

510 L Street, Suite 750  
Anchorage, AK 99501  
907.271.5915

#### FAIRBANKS

101 12th Avenue, Suite 328  
Fairbanks, AK 99701  
907.456.0261

#### KETCHIKAN

1900 First Avenue, Suite 225  
Ketchikan, AK 99901  
907.225.6880

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# Fighting FOR OUR Veterans



U.S. SENATOR  
**DAN SULLIVAN**

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## SENATOR SULLIVAN'S LEGISLATIVE WORK

★ Sullivan introduced ★ Sullivan co-sponsored ★ Signed into law



# Restoring Alaska's VA Health Care

In late 2014, in response to a growing crisis with VA wait times and backlogs across the country, Congress passed the Veterans Choice Act. While VA facilities in the Lower 48 were struggling under the burden of old policies and procedures, Alaska had been successfully operating under innovative agreements and community care models. But overnight, that all changed.

While veterans in the Lower 48 were gaining access to alternatives with the implementation of the Veterans Choice Program, over 8,000 Alaska veterans lost coverage due to a rapid defunding of Alaska's preexisting community partnerships. Since arriving in the Senate in 2015, Senator Sullivan has fought to get Alaska back to a system that was working for veterans -- not against them:

- Increasing the number of physicians at VA Community Based Outpatient Clinics around the state.
- Boosting recruitment with more than 100 new employees in the Alaska VA Healthcare System (AVAHS).
- Reverting appointment referrals back to the local VA.
- Including Alaska-specific provisions in the new VA MISSION Act, preventing a one-size-fits-all approach to veterans health care.
- Working to ensure that collection agencies don't harass veterans for care authorized by the VA.
- Supporting the expansion of VA Community Based Outpatient Clinics around the state [to accommodate more doctors and support staff.]

The Alaska VA Healthcare System has recovered a lot of ground since 2014, recently being recognized by the national VA as the most improved in patient experience for 2018. Under local leadership, AVAHS is moving forward, supported by a reinvigorated partnership with the Alaska Congressional Delegation. Senator Sullivan remains committed to continuing this progress in the Senate.



### VA MISSION Act ★

Legislation to replace the Veterans Choice Program and streamline and strengthen VA community care programs to ensure veterans receive efficient, timely and quality care, signed by President Trump in June 2018. Additionally, the legislation expands eligibility for the VA's Family Caregiver Program to veterans of all generations. Senator Sullivan's amendments require the VA to cover a veteran's care from community providers if the VA doesn't operate a full-service facility in the state, like Alaska; require the VA to reimburse community providers at rates that could account for states with higher costs of care, like Alaska; and preserve Tribal Sharing Agreements, allowing veterans to access care in their community from Alaska Native tribal health providers.

### Support for Suicide Prevention Act ★

Legislation requiring the Comptroller General of the United States to conduct an assessment of the responsibilities, workload, and vacancy rates of the VA's Suicide Prevention Coordinators, and ensure that these men and women have the tools and resources they need to provide veterans with critical mental health resources.

### Forever G.I. Bill Legislation ★★

Legislation eliminating the 15-year G.I. Bill expiration date to use benefits, signed by President Trump in August 2017. The bill makes updates to expand eligibility for reservists, Purple Heart recipients, veterans who faced school closures, and surviving family members.

### Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act ★

Legislation modernizing the outdated benefits claims appeals process at the VA and helping veterans receive more timely decisions. Senator Sullivan's legislation, advocating for a Fully Developed Appeal pilot program, was included and signed by President Trump in August 2017.

### Veterans Affairs Accountability Act ★★

Legislation increasing the VA's authority to remove employees at all levels who are ill-serving veterans, signed by President Trump in June 2017. The bill also has safeguards for whistleblowers, and requires the VA to report on employee morale and the effectiveness of these new reforms.

### Burn Pit Registry & Accountability Acts ★

These acts seek to strengthen and enhance the VA's registry of service members and veterans who were exposed to toxic chemicals and fumes from open-air burn pits while serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.

### Craig Sharp Funeral Honors for Veterans Act ★

Inspired by Palmer resident Kathryn Sharp and her husband Craig Sharp, Navy Chief Petty Officer (Ret.), this legislation requires military installations to develop a plan to utilize both on-base and off-base resources for funeral ceremonies for veterans, even when government resources may not be available.

### VA-DoD Shared Medical Facilities Act ★

Legislation to enhance collaboration and resource sharing between the VA and the Department of Defense (DoD), as well as other Federal health care providers, furthering the access, continuity, and cost effectiveness of direct health care provided to veterans, service members, and their beneficiaries.

### Serving Our Rural Veterans Act ★

Legislation included in the MISSION Act package to require the VA to carry out a pilot program to establish medical education residency positions at both VA and outside facilities, including tribal and DoD facilities, and federally-funded community health centers. Additionally, the VA is required to place at least 100 residents providing care for underserved communities, like Alaska Natives.

### VA Tribal Affairs Advisory Committee Act ★

Legislation that would establish a VA Advisory Committee on Tribal and Indian Affairs, improving the VA's outreach, health care and benefits for Alaska Natives and American Indians. The committee will facilitate communication and understanding between the VA and tribal governments to better address the unique barriers these veterans face when accessing VA services.

