

CHRIS PAPPAS
FIRST DISTRICT, NEW HAMPSHIRE

COMMITTEE ON
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORTATION AND
INFRASTRUCTURE

PAPPAS.HOUSE.GOV



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

WASHINGTON OFFICE:
319 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-5456

MANCHESTER OFFICE:
889 ELM STREET
MANCHESTER, NH 03101
(603) 935-6710

DOVER OFFICE:
660 CENTRAL AVENUE, SUITE 101
DOVER, NH 03820
(603) 285-4300

January 5, 2024

The Honorable Denis McDonough
Secretary of Veterans Affairs
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Ave, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20420

Dear Secretary McDonough,

I write to express my concerns about recent changes made by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to reimbursement rates for massage therapy providers participating in the Veterans Choice Program (VCP).

In recent weeks, I've received correspondence from massage therapy providers in my district participating in the VCP sharing their distress regarding the reduction in reimbursement rates for massage therapy treatments provided to Granite State veterans. This decision has far-reaching implications, adversely affecting veterans' well-being, providers, small business owners, and the overall effectiveness of our health care system.

Massage therapy is an effective and non-invasive form of treatment for various physical and mental health conditions commonly experienced by veterans, including chronic pain, anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Recognized as an integral part of holistic health care for veterans, massage therapy addresses not only physical ailments but also contributes to mental and emotional well-being.

The reduction in reimbursement rates for massage therapy poses a significant threat to providers, many of whom may be unable to sustain the resulting loss in revenue, potentially forcing them to withdraw from the VCP. Regrettably, providers in my district, including veteran-owned businesses, have expressed frustration over the lack of advanced notice regarding the rate change. The absence of prior notification is particularly concerning, given the substantial impact it will have on the financial stability of these businesses. It also undermines the ability of providers to adapt and plan for such significant changes. These providers take great pride in serving the veteran community. Unfortunately, without a prompt reversal of the reimbursement rate change, many will be left with no choice but to withdraw from the VCP.

As a member of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I am committed to supporting our veterans and ensuring they have access to the best possible care, including the comprehensive benefits of massage therapy. Accordingly, I strongly urge VA to reconsider its decision to reduce reimbursement rates for massage therapy providers participating in the VCP. Additionally, I request a briefing within the next 30 days to discuss VA's process for determining changes in reimbursement rates, how VA assesses its potential impact on VCP providers, and how VA communicates these rate changes to affected providers.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Pappas". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Chris Pappas
Member of Congress