



BWD GLOBAL



POLLING MEMO

June 14, 2014

TO: *INTERESTED PARTIES*

FR: BWD GLOBAL

ATTN: BRUCE DONISTHORPE

RE: NM Veterans Survey on VA Health Care & Related Issues

BWD Global completed a survey on June 11, 2014 of veterans throughout the State of New Mexico on issues related to the VA and health care coverage. Our survey generated 1,048 responses and has a 3.5% margin of error.

Veterans were asked 10 questions ranging from their approval ratings of the VA's handling of veteran's health care to specifics as to how long it takes for veterans to receive care once appointments are made with the VA officials in New Mexico.

Major findings from the survey include:

- Almost 46% of veterans surveyed strongly disapprove of the US Department of Veterans Affairs handling of veteran's health care. Another 6% of veterans indicated they somewhat disapprove of the VA's handling of health care. Over 35% of veterans on the survey indicated their approval for the VA's handling of health care with 17% expressing strong approval and 19% expressing "somewhat" approval. About 12% of veterans did not express an opinion on the question.
- Regarding the quality of medical care received by VA officials at regional health care facilities, about 26% of veterans characterized their care as excellent, while 32% said good, 30% said fair and 12% said poor.
- About 23% of veterans indicate they are seeing doctors at VA facilities within one week of making an appointment with the agency. Another 24% said they regularly meet with VA doctors within one-to-two weeks from making an appointment, while 23% said it takes from two weeks to one month to see the VA medical officials. Another 10% said it takes between one and two months, with 8% indicating a wait time of more than three months. Of veterans contacted through our survey, 6% indicated they were unable to get an appointment to see VA medical officials.
- Veterans were asked how long it took to wait for their first medical appointment after the VA scheduled their first-time visit and 46% indicated it was within 30 days. Another 31% said it

took between 30 and 60 days of waiting time for their first visit, while 12% said it took between 60 and 90 days. The remaining 11% said it took three months or longer of waiting time before they could meet their medical officials.

- When asked how long it took veterans to schedule their first appointment with the VA, about 37% said it took less than two weeks, while 31% reported the appointment scheduling taking 15 to 30 days. The remaining 32% said it took longer than 30 days, with most indicating a 30-90 day window (14%), while 7% said it took longer than 90 days.
- 76% of veterans on the survey said the New Mexico Department of Veteran Services should lead an investigation into the problems at the VA Regional Centers and make recommendations as to how the current problems should be resolved.
- 61% of veterans surveyed said the VA should make better use of the patient advocate system, whereby a person helps veterans get needed care and advocacy – if needed --- from agency officials.
- 58% of veterans said they support a voucher system whereby the government allows veterans to obtain health care at non-VA facilities with a nominal fee of less than \$50 charged to the veteran for each visit.
- The survey indicated that 63% of veterans have a high interest in this issue and are carefully following the issue and related news reports.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY: Automated phone dialing survey by BWD GLOBAL of Albuquerque, using established demographic methodological standards to 1,048 known Veteran households throughout New Mexico. Surveys were conducted using this method on June 11th, 2014 between 6 pm and 9 pm, MST. **The margin of sampling error for the surveys conducted for most questions is 3.5% to 4% on the survey** (specific margins of error provided for each question) with a 95% level of confidence for the interviews conducted in this survey.