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Ascension CEO Tony Tersigni Visits White House for VA MISSION Act Signing Ceremony

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(St. Louis) June 6, 2018 – Ascension President and Chief Executive Officer Anthony R. Tersigni, EdD, FACHE, a longtime advocate for veterans, attended today's White House signing ceremony for the VA MISSION Act. Dr. Tersigni, who was reported to be under consideration to head the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), has been a strong supporter of the legislation, [writing in the Wall Street Journal](#) last month to urge its passing.

"I was honored to be invited to represent Ascension and its 165,000 providers and caregivers as President Trump signs this vitally important piece of legislation that means so much to those who have served our nation," Dr. Tersigni said.

The act will combine VA's seven community care programs into one and extend for one year the Veterans Choice Program, which allows veterans to obtain care from non-VA care providers, while the VA implements a new consolidated community care program.

The act also expands the circumstances under which veterans can obtain non-VA healthcare. Currently, veterans may seek third-party care if they face a wait of at least 30 days for a VA appointment or live more than 40 miles from a VA facility. The VA MISSION Act removes these limitations and allows veterans access to non-VA care if they require services not offered by VA or if their doctor decides it is in their best interest.

"This act provides critical funding for care, new healthcare capacity, and new tools to improve employee performance across the Department of Veterans Affairs system," Dr. Tersigni said. "Without this legislation, funding for the Veterans Choice Program would have run out, making it harder for millions of veterans to receive the care they need."

In the past two years, Ascension has attended to more than 50,000 visits from veterans through the [Veterans Choice Program](#), 94 percent of which were outpatient. Nationwide, Ascension has connected veterans to the care they need through a National Veterans Call Center designed for and composed of veterans.

"Ascension continues to think differently about how we can care about our veterans and use the lessons learned from the program thus far," Dr. Tersigni said. "We learn from providers who participate in the program and, most importantly, from veterans themselves on how we can better improve care delivery for this important population."

Ascension has met or exceeded the standards of care for the Veterans Choice Program. For example, the standard time from appointment request to appointment is 30 days, while Ascension's average is 27 days.

"Our Mission calls us to care for all, especially those who are poor and vulnerable. It's for this reason that the VA MISSION Act truly resonates with us, and we are humbled to serve this deserving population," Dr. Tersigni said.

About Ascension

Ascension (www.ascension.org) is a faith-based healthcare organization dedicated to transformation through innovation across the continuum of care. As the largest non-profit health system in the U.S. and the world's largest Catholic health system, Ascension is committed to delivering compassionate, personalized care to all, with special attention to persons living in poverty and those most vulnerable. In FY2017, Ascension provided more than \$1.8 billion in care of persons living in poverty and other community benefit programs. Ascension includes approximately 165,000 associates and 34,000 aligned providers. Ascension's Healthcare Division operates more than 2,600 sites of care – including 153 hospitals and more than 50 senior living facilities – in 22 states and the District of Columbia, while its Solutions Division provides a variety of services and solutions including physician practice management, venture capital investing, investment management, biomedical engineering, facilities management, clinical care management, information services, risk management, and contracting through Ascension's own group purchasing organization.

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