Ranking Member of the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee Jon Tester’s bipartisan Caring for Our Veterans Act gets rid of the Choice Program as we know it and establishes a new community health care system with a streamlined set of rules for Montana veterans, providers, and VA staff. After months of bipartisan and bicameral negotiations on his bill, Jon fought to get it included in the VA MISSION Act, which pulls provisions from numerous VA reform bills to create a bipartisan compromise that will improve the ability of veterans to access the timely and quality care they deserve.

The VA MISSION Act includes the following provisions from Jon’s Caring for Our Veterans Act:

- Scraps the Choice Program as we know it today.
- Establishes one streamlined community care program that allows veterans and their doctors to choose where to get health care.
- Makes it easier for a community provider to provide care to veterans.
- Creates new standards for faster reimbursements to private providers who care for veterans.
- Requires stronger accountability and transparency to ensure government contractors like Health Net are meeting the terms of their contractual requirements.
- Strengthens the safety measures and guidelines for private providers to prescribe opioids to veterans.
- Removes barriers for veterans to access mental telehealth care closer to home.
- Incentivizes medical residents and providers to work at rural, tribal and underserved VA facilities.
- Provides greater recruitment, retention and relocation incentives so that VA can attract and maintain high-quality providers.
- Increases the amount VA will reimburse medical professionals for education debt reduction.
- Recruits medical scribes to assist physicians so that doctors can focus on serving veterans, and not filling out paperwork.
- Expands eligibility for VA caregiver support services to veterans of all eras, and modernizes and strengthens support services.

The VA MISSION Act also includes additional provisions authored by Jon:

- Develops criteria to identify underserved medical facilities and incentivize medical professionals to complete their residencies in rural areas.
- Establishes mobile deployment teams to provide additional care at the highest-need VA facilities.