

Publications

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VA's Community Care Network Procurement Enters Proposal Phase

Key Takeaways

- The VA has launched its next-generation Community Care Network procurement, with proposals due March 16, 2026. The multiple-award IDIQ will recompetete contracts that administer roughly 40% of VA care.
- The VA is framing CCN Next Gen as a reset of how it buys and oversees community care. The new structure increases competition and raises performance expectations for participating plans and vendors.
- Health plans, TPAs and key subcontractors interested in competing as primes or teammates should treat the coming weeks as decisive for teaming, proposal positioning and compliance control.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is currently in an active proposal period for its next-generation Community Care Network (CCN) procurement, with proposals due March 16, 2026.

For health plans, third-party administrators (TPAs) and subcontractors supporting provider network management, claims operations, customer service, pharmacy networks and information technology, this procurement is positioned to shape who administers community care — and how — for years.

How the VA is Structuring the Procurement

This is not a “watch list” opportunity. The VA is issuing updates during the bid window, including extending the written questions deadline and publishing pre-proposal conference materials. The VA is soliciting bids from organizations that can serve as a TPA responsible for regionally managed medical services, customer service, quality outcomes, data/performance metrics and claims processing/payment for services ordered against the contract.

Industry reporting describes the procurement as a multiple-award indefinite-delivery, indefinite-quantity (IDIQ) contract vehicle valued at up to \$700 billion over a 10-year ordering period for the multiple-award IDIQ, structured as a three-year base period and

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three two-year option periods, followed by a one-year option.

Why the VA is Acting Now

The VA announced on Dec. 15, 2025 it had released a request for proposals (RFP) for “next generation” community care contracts intended to modernize and expand how VA purchases and manages non-VA care for Veterans over the next decade.

The VA is recompeting because many existing community care administration contracts — awarded in 2018 to health plans acting as TPAs — expire in 2026. Given The VA’s community care administration accounts for about 40% of all VA care, this re-compete will shape who controls a significant share of Veterans’ access to non-VA services.

The VA also frames this procurement as a programmatic reset: more competition, tighter quality expectations and stronger oversight enabled by data and technology.

What “Next Gen” Actually Means: Competition, Oversight and Replaceability

The VA’s stated objectives for the new CCN contracts include:

- **More choices for Veterans** through an IDIQ structure that allows multiple national and regional health plans to compete;
- **Improved quality of care** by requiring adherence to broad industry standards of care used by major health care systems
- **Improved oversight** by providing the VA the data, technology and systems to manage care “in real time”; and
- **Contract flexibility** through multiple competitive task orders over the life of the IDIQ, including the ability to **off-ramp** contractors that do not meet VA requirements and replace them to avoid disruption of care.

Practically, award is only the entry point; staying positioned for task orders (and staying compliant) is the long game.

What Contractors Should Be Doing Right Now

With proposals due March 16, 2026, companies that want to compete (as primes or key teammates) should consider taking the following steps:

- **Treat this as a program, not a one-time award.** Because this is a multiple-award IDIQ, competition does not end at award. Offerors should plan for continuing task-order competitions and ongoing performance scrutiny over the life of the vehicle.
- **Make the operating model feel real.** Proposals should demonstrate how the team will run provider network operations, customer service, claims operations, pharmacy network support and the technology/reporting backbone at scale. Teammates should be clear on roles, handoffs and accountability.
- **Manage amendments like a compliance function.** A disciplined approach to amendments — one owner, one source-of-truth compliance tracker and controlled updates across volumes — reduces the risk of missed instructions and internal inconsistencies.
- **Use the question process strategically.** Where requirements are unclear, offerors should treat the question window as risk management. Unexamined assumptions can become proposal weaknesses or post-award performance exposure.

The VA has framed CCN Next Gen as a ten-year reset of how it buys and oversees community care — more competition, stronger quality expectations, more data-driven

oversight and flexibility to replace underperforming contractors without disrupting care. Companies looking to compete should treat the coming weeks as decisive for teaming, proposal positioning and compliance control.

For more information about CCN Next Gen, please contact James Kim, Cate Baskin or your regular Polsinelli attorney.