



PRESS RELEASE

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VVA Calls for Passage of Bill to Repeal Amendments to Controlled Substance Act and to Ensure Access to Effective Pain Treatments

(Washington, D.C.)—“Vietnam Veterans of America strongly urges passage of Senate Bill 1960, cosponsored by Sen. Claire McCaskill (D-MO) and Sen. Joe Manchin III (D-WV), which would repeal the amendments made to the *Controlled Substances Act* by the *Ensuring Patient Access and Effective Drug Enforcement Act of 2016*,” said John Rowan, National President of VVA “The opioid epidemic confronting America is a growing public health crisis from which none of us are immune. The impact of this epidemic is felt by veterans and their families across the country. The Drug Enforcement Agency is one of our first lines of defense against this all-consuming disease. The DEA must be permitted to enhance its law-enforcement efforts to fight the opioid epidemic and prosecute those responsible for fueling it,” said Rowan.

“Vietnam veterans suffer a variety of sustained and chronic injuries and afflictions, including exposure to the herbicide Agent Orange. Many of these veterans have been living with chronic pain for more than 40 years, and the access they have to medications and treatments is often the difference between being productive and being bedridden,” noted Rowan. “We can help veterans by ensuring they have access to improved treatments and medications to better manage their chronic pain. Every person experiences pain differently and responds to treatments in different ways,” said Rowan. “Whether the pain stems from head trauma, spinal cord injury, or amputation, there must be a variety of options available to treat the unique symptoms our veterans are experiencing. The rise in prescription drug abuse threatens to stifle these options for fear of the further spread of abuse and misuse. We must not let that happen.”

“Make no mistake, prescription drug abuse is a grave concern within the veterans’ community,” said Rowan, “and we support proactive measures to educate veterans of this threat and to encourage responsible prescribing to ensure these medicines stay out of the hands of those who abuse and misuse them. However, we cannot allow for the abuse dynamic to restrict veterans’ access to the highest quality medications and treatments needed to relieve their pain. Addressing the opioid crisis requires a multifaceted approach, involving everyone, including the prescribers, pharmaceutical companies, mental-health professionals, pharmacists, federal and state agencies, and professional organizations, such as the American Medical Association.”

