



## PRESS RELEASE

Vietnam Veterans of America

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### **VVA: Strengthen VA Healthcare System, Don't Let 'Privatization' Decimate It**

**(Washington, DC)** – “There are those who insist the VA healthcare system is irredeemably broken and that privatization is the only answer to improving health care for veterans,” said John Rowan, National President of Vietnam Veterans of America, to a joint session of the House and Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committees on March 6. “This is far from the truth. VA’s integrated, managed healthcare system needs to be strengthened, not decimated,” said Rowan.

“What is absent is the organizational capacity to treat our nation’s veterans in public and private hospitals across the country,” said Rowan, noting that the cause of the scandal at the Phoenix VA Medical Center leading to the enactment in 2014 of the *Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act* was not incompetence or venality, rather it was a serious shortage of clinicians needed to meet a steadily increasing demand for health care.

“The privatization of VA healthcare will take the VA, the taxpayers, and our veterans who depend on the VA down a slippery slope to a very expensive disaster,” said Rowan. “The Veterans Health Administration would be transformed into a cash cow, giving veterans eligible for VA healthcare the choice to seek their medical treatment anywhere, with a clinician of their choosing.”

Citing the staggering cost estimates of varying levels of privatizing the VA’s healthcare system ([Commission on Care Final Report](#)), Rowan cautioned, “there are those who would destroy VA healthcare for their own short-term profit. Those who knock the ‘failed’ VA are seemingly oblivious to the reform efforts advocated for and instituted by VA Secretary David Shulkin.”

“Most VAMCs in effect provide eligible veterans with one-stop shopping for everything from flu shots to life-saving surgery, coordinated by their primary care provider,” noted Rowan. “Savvy veterans can stack three, four, five appointments in a single day. Try doing this in your local hospital or medical center. Does anyone here think that getting appointments to see three, four, or five specialists in a day is feasible in these entities?”

