



PRESS RELEASE

Vietnam Veterans of America

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 16, 2018

No. 18-3

Contact: Mokie Porter
301-996-0901; 301-585-
4000, Ext. 146

Our Veterans Need VA Secretary Shulkin

(Washington, DC) –“Amid the flurry of contradictory media reports citing various unnamed sources, it’s a challenge deciphering the truth from the ‘Fake’ news. What remains constant, however, is VA Secretary David Shulkin’s firm stance to protect the VA from those who would like to see it handed over to the for-profit, private-sector health systems,” said VVA National President John Rowan. “Secretary Shulkin understands that veterans would be lost in the private sector, and he knows that President Trump’s commitment to caring for our nation’s veterans is paramount. We want to see Secretary Shulkin finish the revitalization of the VA that was ordered by President Trump.”

“Furthermore, some of the recent negative news stories have been misleading. While the issues identified by the VA Inspector General’s report on the D.C. Medical Center were real, they are old news,” noted Rowan. “Secretary Shulkin fired VA Medical Center Director Brian Hawkins in September 2017 for failure to provide effective leadership at the D.C. Medical Center. He utilized the *VA Accountability Act*, signed into law by President Trump in June 2017, making effective use of this much-needed legislation.”

In a House hearing on March 15, Secretary Shulkin told the Appropriations Subcommittee that he is not in favor of privatization. “You can’t take the 9.1 million veterans getting care in the VA system — 60 percent of whom carry a mental health issue — and release them into the general public. It simply couldn’t work by turning on a switch and privatizing the system,” Shulkin said. “The President is very, very committed to improving services for veterans,” noted Shulkin, praising him for his support of the proposed \$200 billion budget for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Shulkin told the Appropriations Subcommittee that while there is no pressure to privatize the VA from the White House, there is pressure to fix the VA, and the way to fix the VA is by investing in it where it needs to be improved and also by working with the private sector.

“We have no issue with the VA getting assistance from the outside when relevant and necessary, but veterans prefer to get their comprehensive care at the VA,” said Rowan, noting that many do not realize the VA already makes excellent use of outside medical resources. Most VA Medical Centers

are affiliated with a medical school, which provides many of the specialized medical personnel that veterans need. “My aortic valve replacement last year at the Manhattan VAMC was done by the chief thoracic surgeon and his surgical team from NYU Medical Center. But my aftercare was provided by the skilled and caring staff at the VAMC, many of whom were veterans,” noted Rowan.

#

