

June 26, 2015

The Honorable Jon Tester  
United States Senate  
Member Committee on Veterans Affairs  
Hart Senate 311  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Tester,

On behalf of the Veterans Affairs Physician Assistant Association (VAPAA) as a member, I write you today to fully support “*The Delivering Opportunities for Care (DOCs) for Veterans Act.*” S. 1649. With all of the recent concerns over improving access to care for our veterans, your comprehensive legislation will move VHA in the right direction of creating medical resident positions, improved telemedicine healthcare, expand Licensed Professional Mental Health Counselors and Marriage and Family Therapists as professions for our nation’s veterans seeking mental health care, establishes programs targeting our rural veterans seeking VA services.

I strongly support the vital Section 201 to address the long standing critical VHA retention and recruiting problems with physician assistants by including them in Nurse Locality pay rates. We believe that because of the significant need for more health care providers immediate steps must be taken at VHA national level, for the resolving PA employment problems not leaving it up to local facilities to address, in order to meet the soaring demands for more VA primary care providers in the nation’s VA outpatient clinics and medical centers. Requiring also that VHA reports on how it provides educational scholarships (EDRP) for critical health care occupations is vital to improving transparency in this program so the top five critical health occupations including PA’s are able to receive the scholarships needed to recruit them into VHA positions.

As a PA I believe S.1676 will resolve problems to improve health care access for our veterans, and we encourage you and other Senate Veterans Affairs Committee members to work together on passage of this legislation. Thank you for your role on this especially for our rural veterans, and I appreciate your dedication on these veteran’s issues.

Sincerely,

VAPA Member  
Signature  
Home Address