



March 23, 2017

The Honorable Debbie Dingell
United States House of Representatives
116 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

On behalf of the Association of the United States Navy, we would like to pledge our support for H.R. 501, the VA Transparency Enhancement Act of 2017. This bill requires VA hospitals to improve reporting of infection rates, surgical cancellations, and other issues impacting quality of care.

Public and private hospitals are required to report a variety of quality measures to the National Healthcare Safety Network, including surgical infections. The VA Transparency Enhancement Act will bring VA reporting requirements more in line with other hospitals, and require them to report on surgical cancellations and the impact on patients for the first time.

The VA Transparency Enhancement Act would require the Department of Veterans Affairs to report quarterly to Congress on the number of patients who contracted an infection as a result of a surgery and the number of surgeries cancelled or transferred by the VA. While the VA currently provides completed and pending appointment data from local VA medical facilities to the public monthly, the VA does not publically release data on rates of infection or cancelled or transferred surgeries.

The need for increased transparency was underscored again in late 2016, when press reports revealed that the Detroit VA Medical Center had become a one-star facility based on an internal quality-of-care rating system used by the VA. Dingell and Walberg sent a letter to VA Secretary Robert McDonald seeking answers about steps being taken to improve performance and quality of care and questioning why the information was not available to the public. The VA has since posted the ratings on its website, allowing the public to see for the first time how their local VA hospitals have performed over time.

Thank you for taking an active role in such an important issue to the Military and Veteran community by working to improve the lives and careers of those who served our great nation. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns at 703-548-5800 or at michael.little@ausn.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael Joseph Little". To the right of the signature, the text "ABRN (Adv. Sec.)" and "USNR" is written in blue ink.

Michael J. Little
Director of Legislative Affairs