

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 2, 2024

The Honorable Denis McDonough
Secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Mr. Secretary,

We are writing to express our concern regarding the latest attempt by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) initiative to weaken Veteran's surgical anesthesia care standards.¹

To date, there appears to be no rationale for the VA to diminish its current standards. Specifically, no independent patient safety research exists to support changes to VA's well-established policies. To the contrary, existing data suggests dismantling the team-based model of care would result in increased risk of harm to Veterans, particularly to the recently enrolled PACT Act Veterans, a patient population with unique health care needs. This is neither appropriate, safe, nor in the best interest of Veterans. The care of these patients requires the safest, highest medical standards available. VA is currently well-staffed with physician anesthesiologists to provide this level of care.

A recent survey by the American Legion also found that nine out of 10 veterans said they preferred to have the same care within the VA that they would receive within any other hospital system.² Veterans overwhelmingly preferred to have physician-administered anesthesia care by a 12 to one margin, and more than 71 percent believe the VA standard of care would negatively change if physician were replaced. VA patients have earned and deserve the same standards of care as civilians, not a different standard and certainly not a weaker standard.

Lacking clear justification for changes to Veterans anesthesia care standards, VA should affirm its existing standards and put an immediate end to any initiative to weaken or lower the quality of care for our nation's Veterans.

Sincerely,



David Scott
Member of Congress



Michael R. Turner
Member of Congress

¹ VA National Standards of Practice. Listening Session. September 21, 2023. Accessed May 8, 2024. https://www.va.gov/STANDARDSOFPRACTICE/docs/NSP_ListeningSession5_Transcript_508.pdf.

² American Legion National Survey on Veterans' Care Preferences. 18 Sept. 2023. Available [HERE](#).



Andrew R. Garbarino
Member of Congress



Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



Joseph D. Morelle
Member of Congress



Barry Moore
Member of Congress



Dan Meuser
Member of Congress



Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress



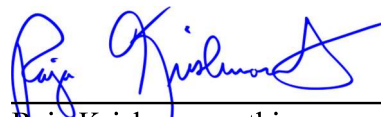
Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress



Ann Wagner
Member of Congress



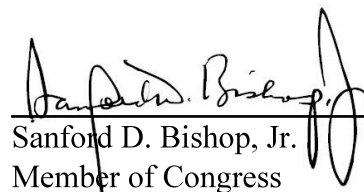
Neal P. Dunn, M.D.
Member of Congress



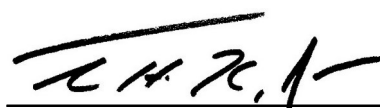
Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress



Gregory F. Murphy, M.D.
Member of Congress



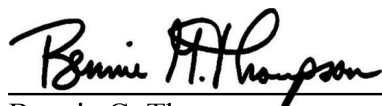
Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
Member of Congress



Thomas H. Kean, Jr.
Member of Congress



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress



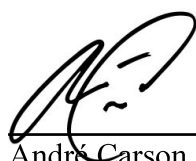
Ralph Norman
Member of Congress



Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



John R. Moolenaar
Member of Congress



Andre Carson
Member of Congress



Dan Newhouse
Member of Congress



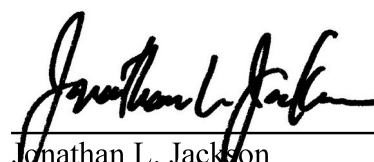
Marilyn Strickland
Member of Congress



Beth Van Duyne
Member of Congress



Nicole Malliotakis
Member of Congress



Jonathan L. Jackson
Member of Congress



Don Bacon
Member of Congress



Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



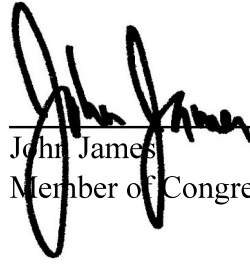
Ron Estes
Member of Congress



Susan Wild
Member of Congress



William R. Timmons, IV
Member of Congress



John James
Member of Congress



Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



Claudia Tenney
Member of Congress



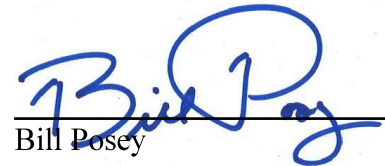
Thomas R. Suozzi
Member of Congress



Maria Elvira Salazar
Member of Congress



Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress



Bill Posey
Member of Congress



Stephanie Bice
Member of Congress



Brian Babin, D.D.S.
Member of Congress



Michelle Steel
Member of Congress



Austin Scott
Member of Congress



A. Drew Ferguson IV
Member of Congress




Morgan Luttrell
Member of Congress


Barry Loudermilk
Member of Congress


Michael A. Rulli
Member of Congress



James Comer
Member of Congress


Gus M. Bilirakis
Member of Congress



Michael V. Lawler
Member of Congress

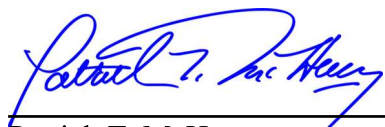

Mike Carey
Member of Congress


Monica De La Cruz
Member of Congress



Robert J. Wittman
Member of Congress



Vince Fong
Member of Congress


Jeff Duncan
Member of Congress


Patrick T. McHenry
Member of Congress



Lance Gooden
Member of Congress


David Rouzer
Member of Congress


Jefferson Van Drew
Member of Congress



Mark E. Amodei
Member of Congress



Nancy Mace
Member of Congress



Pete Sessions
Member of Congress



Julia Letlow, Ph.D.
Member of Congress

Cc: The Honorable Shereef Elnahal, MD, MBA
Undersecretary for Health
U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs