



FRIENDS OF VA MEDICAL CARE
AND HEALTH RESEARCH

February 20, 2025

The Honorable Mike Bost
Chairman
House Committee on Veterans' Affairs

The Honorable Mark Takano
Ranking Member
House Committee on Veterans' Affairs

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable John Carter
Chairman
House Subcommittee on Military Construction,
VA, and Related Agencies

The Honorable Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Ranking Member
House Subcommittee on Military Construction,
VA, and Related Agencies

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Chairman
Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs

The Honorable Richard Blumenthal
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chairwoman
Senate Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Patty Murray
Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable John Boozman
Chairman
Senate Subcommittee on Military Construction,
VA, and Related Agencies

The Honorable Jon Ossoff
Ranking Member
Senate Subcommittee on Military Construction,
VA, and Related Agencies

Dear Chairman Bost, Ranking Member Takano, Chairman Cole, Ranking Member DeLauro, Chairman Carter, Ranking Member Wasserman Schultz, Chairman Moran, Ranking Member Blumenthal, Chairwoman Collins, Vice Chair Murray, Chairman Boozman, and Ranking Member Ossoff,

On behalf of the Friends of VA Medical Care and Health Research (FOVA), a coalition of over 80 organizations dedicated to advancing the VA research mission, we write to express our deep concern regarding the federal hiring freeze and the recent mass dismissal of VA employees. These actions will have an immediate and detrimental impact on veteran care, patient safety, and the groundbreaking medical research conducted at VA medical centers nationwide.

Among the critical roles affected by these measures are physicians, nurses, patient coordinators, clinician-scientists, and other essential medical personnel—positions already experiencing significant shortages across the VA system. The loss of these professionals will result in longer wait times, diminished access to specialized care, and compromised patient safety.

Additionally, the hiring freeze is crippling VA research, threatening medical innovation and putting life-saving treatments for veterans at risk. Key studies on cancer treatments, opioid addiction, prosthetics, suicide prevention, and toxic exposures face disruption or cancellation. The impact of these interruptions

extends far beyond research institutions—it directly affects veterans who rely on these clinical trials and interventions.

According to data collected by NAVREF Membership, by April 20th, 2025, the hiring freeze could result in:

- The suspension or cancellation of **370 extramural studies and clinical trials**,
- **Up to 10,000 veterans** losing access to critical treatments provided through these studies,
- The loss of **\$35 million in VA research funding**,
- The departure of essential **principal investigators and research coordinators**.

The urgency of this matter cannot be overstated. We urge the Administration and Congress to **immediately halt and rescind the dismissals of key medical and research staff** and to **exempt all roles related to medical care and research from the federal hiring freeze**. These actions are necessary to protect veteran health, maintain medical research momentum, and prevent irreparable harm to VA's ability to deliver high-quality care.

FOVA welcomes the opportunity to collaborate with policymakers to develop solutions that preserve the integrity of VA medical care and research. We stand ready to provide further information on the hiring freeze's impact and to assist in crafting policies that ensure veterans continue receiving the highest standard of care they deserve.

We ask for your immediate attention to this crisis and urge you to work with us to safeguard the future of VA healthcare and research. Please do not hesitate to contact us for further discussion.

Sincerely,

The FOVA Executive Committee

Roscoe Butler
Paralyzed Veterans of America

K. Conwell Smith
American Psychological Association

Gary Ewart
American Thoracic Society

Rashi Romanoff
National Association of Veterans Research and
Education Foundations

Andrew Herrin
Association of American Medical Colleges

Jennifer Zeitzer
Federation of American Societies for
Experimental Biology

Jon Retzer
Disabled American Veterans

CC:

The Honorable Bill Cassidy, Chairman, Senate HELP Committee

The Honorable Bernie Sanders, Ranking Member, Senate HELP Committee

The Honorable Ted Cruz, Chairman, Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

The Honorable Maria Cantwell, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

The Honorable Tim Walberg, Chairman, House Committee on Education & Workforce
The Honorable Robert C. “Bobby” Scott, Ranking Member, House Committee on Education & Workforce
The Honorable Brett Guthrie, Chairman, House Energy & Commerce Committee
The Honorable Frank Pallone, Ranking Member, House Energy & Commerce Committee