

**NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF
THE AMERICAN LEGION
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA
MAY 10 - 11, 2017**

Resolution No. 22: Public/Private Partnership with the Department of Veterans Affairs to Expand Reach with Local Hospitals

Origin: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission

Submitted By: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission

WHEREAS, There are a high number of veterans returning from deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan who have serious health-care needs; and

WHEREAS, Due to the increased need for health care of these veterans, the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) is increasingly becoming overwhelmed by the physical and mental health issues these veterans have, such that quality and timeliness of care is being negatively affected; and

WHEREAS, Because of a constantly growing and aging general and veteran population, the demand for quality health-care providers has intensified and nearly every specialty in the medical field is experiencing physician shortages that by the year 2030 are projected to exceed 25,000 providers; and

WHEREAS, The projections will occur in both primary and specialty care, which will pose significant risk to all patients, including veteran patients; and

WHEREAS, There are a significant number of patients, particularly veteran patients, who live in rural areas of the United States where the health-care practitioners are in shortest supply in terms of patient to physician ratios; and

WHEREAS, According to the Health Resources & Services Administration some of the nation's most populous states have the highest numbers of health professional shortages (dental health care, mental health care and primary care providers), including California, Texas, Michigan, Florida, and Illinois; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and other entities which provide health care must find ways to encourage health-care providers to pursue primary care and specialty fields and direct physicians to areas that are experiencing the most critical shortages geographically; and

WHEREAS, The VA can look at some of the best practices used by other hospital systems and medical facilities to recruit and retain more health-care providers, particularly physicians, interested in pursuing primary care careers; and

WHEREAS, The VHA can pursue many different avenues to get more health-care providers into their systems such as looking for service-based activities in applicants, recruiting non-traditional students and providers such as older students, and students with other training like physician assistants and registered nurses; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on May 10-11, 2017, That The American Legion encourage the Veterans Health Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to develop relationships with local hospitals and other medical facilities, similar to the limited partnership VA enjoys with the Department of Defense (DoD) at select DoD medical facilities, in order to combat the physician shortage in the VA health-care system; ensuring that care in the community has the resources necessary to provide timely, quality care and medical records access by leasing sufficient space of existing community medical facilities, where prudent and reasonable, to expand VA's footprint in areas where veterans are underserved and have limited access to VA health care; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That this partnership not be used to degrade existing capacity within the VA portfolio of care and services but to increase options for veterans, especially in rural areas.