



# **Chairman Rodney Frelinghuysen**

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## *House Committee on Appropriations*

### **Hearing: Veterans Affairs Electronic Health Record Oversight November 15, 2017 Opening Statement As Prepared**

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Thank you for being here today. We are here because of your reprogramming request for additional resources for your electronic health records project. As all of us are aware, VA and DOD electronic health record compatibility has been an issue for over 20 years. In fact, four years ago your predecessor, Eric Shinseki, and the Department of Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel promised to find a solution within a year. It was never done. DOD went one way and the VA went another.

Despite those decisions, Congress has also supported this joint effort by providing billions of dollars over the years. So when the Committee was asked on short notice to approve a reprogramming to get yet another proposed project started, and one that would require many billions of dollars over a long period of time. It was clear we needed some answers.

Today we need answers: True costs, what can be salvaged from the old system, and when it is all said and done, will the systems be seamless and will this investment take away from dollars needed, as well, to replace old IT systems at dozens of VA hospitals -meet the challenges of the new CHOICE program and the embarrassing backlog of cases.

Two priorities for the entire Appropriations Committee is that we ensure that we are providing the best medical care for veterans, and that we are setting out on a fiscally responsible course to meet their needs. All of us want to hear in detail and for the record, how the new electronic health record project will accomplish both goals.