

Hearing on Long-Term Health Challenges and Long Term Care
Chairwoman Wasserman Schultz
February 13, 2019 @ 2:00 pm

- The subcommittee will come to order.
- Good afternoon, everyone. Today we welcome Dr. Teresa Boyd, Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Clinical Operations, and Dr. Scotte Hartronft, Acting Executive Director of the VA Office of Geriatrics and Extended Care.
- As a nation, we have a solemn duty and sacred responsibility to support and care for the men and women who have defended our nation and protected our values.
- In my role as Chairwoman of this subcommittee, I am deeply committed to honoring the charge from our nation's 16th President that is etched on the front of the VA headquarters – “To care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and his orphan.”
- There is no mission statement more important than that, and under my leadership, this committee will own and honor it. [PAUSE] We will also update that mission to reflect the brave women who are now a part of it.
- Veterans who are living longer have a greater diversity of needs, and we need to be meeting them in more diverse ways.
- The facilities I've visited in South Florida provide decent levels of care, but that's not true everywhere around the country.
- A recent *USA Today* and *Boston Globe* investigation found disturbing cases of substandard care at VA nursing homes, and unsettling efforts to keep those assessments quiet.

- I will work closely with our veteran support groups to address these issues.
- Quite simply, it's unacceptable. Anyone who risked their life for this nation should never have to risk it again inside a nursing home.
- The Office of Geriatrics and Extended Care is committed to providing options for veterans to choose which type of care works best for them at the individual level.
- VA is required by statute to provide institutional nursing home facilities, but that might not be the best option for every Veteran and their family.
- Veterans should have choices if they want to age in place, and I know you both are committed to finding the best option for each individual veteran.
- Dr. Boyd and Dr. Hartronft – I would like the hearing today to be more of a conversation regarding the long term care of Veterans.
- We want you to highlight the great work you both are doing at VHA, and shine some light on these important issues.
- Thank you both for being here today, and I look forward to your testimony.