

Good care starts with good doctors. With all that our veterans have sacrificed for this country, the responsibility falls to us to carry through on the promises we've made to them.

There are many doctors at the VA who work to serve our veterans.

In February of 2019, a report from the Government Accountability Office indicated that several VA facilities had physicians and other practitioners on payroll with suspended or revoked medical licenses.

As another example, the VA Office of Inspector General from January of this year found that a urologist at a VA facility in Iowa was prescribing drugs without a Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) registration. .

Many doctors in the VA's system are working hard to care for our veterans. However, these unqualified doctors should not be entrusted with the care of our veterans.

My bill, the Improving Confidence in Veterans' Care Act, would ensure that the VA is hiring and keeping only practitioners in good-standing.

For starters, this bill would require VA staff to regularly review the credentials of all health care practitioners in its system, like doctors and nurse practitioners.

Physicians who prescribe drugs must be registered with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). Under this bill, the VA would also require staff to check that each doctor who prescribes drugs in its system is registered with the DEA.

Additionally, the VA would be charged with monitoring the performance of its doctors. Should the VA determine that a complaint against a doctor is substantiated, staff must notify a professional's medical licensing board, the DEA, and the National Practitioner Data Bank.

In its report, GAO found that VA staff in charge of hiring weren't well-versed in resources for checking the credentials of VA health care professionals.

Therefore, this bill would require regular biannual training to these employees on how to check credentials using sources like the National Practitioner Data Bank and State medical licensing boards.

Last Congress, this bill passed the House by a vote of 409-1. For context, the one “no” vote later changed their vote to a yes.

With broad support last year, it is my hope that this bill can pass again this Congress and maybe be signed into law.

My staff and I are eager to work with Committee on getting this bill to the House floor.

Ultimately, America owes a tremendous debt to our veterans, and the Improving Confidence in Veterans’ Care Act would be an important step towards ensuring that they will receive the care owed to them.

I thank you for your time, and I hope we can work together on this bill.