Statement for the Record
Submitted by the National Association of Veterans' Research and Education Foundations
(NAVREF)

House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Subcommittee on Health — Legislative Hearing
June 12, 2025 | 2:15 PM

The National Association of Veterans' Research and Education Foundations (NAVREF) is the national nonprofit organization representing over 75 VA-affiliated nonprofit research and education corporations (NPCs), established by Congress [38 U.S.C. §§7361-7366] to support the VA's medical and scientific research enterprise. Since 1992, our community has facilitated clinical trials, engaged private sector and academic partners, and advanced groundbreaking discoveries that improve the health and lives of veterans.

VA Data Transparency and Trust Act
We commend the intent behind the VA Data Transparency and Trust Act to improve transparency and trust in VA data. However, we have concerns about the scope and quality of data that would be accessed and reported if the legislation were enacted. Specifically, the bill calls for medical services data as defined by 38 U.S.C. §1701, which may not fully capture the complexity of veteran care and research activities at VA. For example, a veteran receiving medical care for diabetes at VA could also be enrolled in an **industry-sponsored** diabetes study at the same VA medical center, but those treatment protocols are not traditionally accounted for the same way as a "medical service" is. This segmentation risks incomplete or skewed reporting, limiting the full picture of veteran care and research. We urge Congress and VA stakeholders to carefully consider these nuances to ensure transparency efforts accurately reflect the scope of veteran care and research and ultimately, keep VA accountable on all aspects of the integrated health care system.

RNA Sequencing to Diagnose PTSD Bill
NAVREF fully supports the direction of the proposed legislation directing the VA to study whether RNA sequencing can effectively diagnose inflammation or cellular stress symptoms related to PTSD in veterans. This initiative aligns with ongoing VA research efforts to explore innovative molecular diagnostics and precision medicine approaches that could improve mental health diagnosis and treatment. Several VA-affiliated nonprofits are actively engaged in PTSD research, and NAVREF's membership stands ready to collaborate with the VA and congressional committees by sharing expertise, supporting study implementation, and facilitating connections with research programs. We also encourage the legislation to be inclusive of the VA Million Veteran Program and direct it to use its resources and data to engage in this initiative.

NAVREF appreciates the opportunity to provide input on these important legislative efforts. We look forward to working closely with Congress and VA leaders to help refine policies and support research that advances veterans' health and wellbeing.