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Testimony of John Schmitt

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Subcommittee on Health

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Good afternoon Chairwoman Miller-Meeks, Ranking Member Brownley, and Members of the Subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

I want to begin today not with science, but with intention behind the science—because when it comes to the lives of veterans, as one myself, I believe intention matters.

In 2010, the founder of iXpressGenes, Dr. Joe Ng—a molecular biologist and professor at the University of Alabama in Huntsville—was in a routine faculty meeting. Tragedy struck when a colleague pulled a handgun from her handbag and murdered three people in front of him. Joe fortunately survived but in the aftermath, he witnessed a haunting spectrum of resilience among his colleagues.

Joe asked a question that would change everything: *Could trauma have an immunological component?* And that question set us on a path to transform trauma care forever.

I met Dr. Ng in 2018. I'm John Schmitt, CEO of iXpressGenes and a two-tour Iraq combat veteran having served over 20 years. When Joe and I crossed paths, I was still in uniform—trapped in a culture of silence. Like many of my peers, because of the risk to my career, I could not admit I was unraveling. Depressed, anxious, and increasingly suicidal.

That journey for me has turned into a mission. Today, I testify not just as a veteran and a CEO, but as a survivor advocating for the science that helped me heal and I hope will help millions of others.

While in uniform, I earned a degree in microbiology and immunology from Vanderbilt University School of Medicine. A fateful step—one that quietly equipped me to understand the science and application of the technology I stand before you advocating for. Together, our team at iXpressGenes has developed a groundbreaking blood test using the power of RNA transcriptome analysis—the Trauma Autoimmune Indicator, or TAI™. It identifies inflammation caused by trauma—detectable *before* symptoms even surface to empower prevention, enable early intervention, and inform effective treatment for best possible outcomes.

The TAI™ test reads RNA transcription—how the body's genes are responding right now, in real time creating potential for limitless therapeutic strategies never before possible. Unlike genetics which tell us what might happen. RNA tells us what *is* happening.



This matters. Because the kind of inflammation we detect is the root cause for the oxidative stress and neuroinflammation crossing the blood-brain barrier and contributes to anxiety, depression, the hallmarks of PTSD. This lab developed test is already available commercially through our lab in Huntsville, Alabama. It's low-cost, scalable, and precise.

With the VA, we are not starting from scratch. With our partnership at the VA in Birmingham, we've already demonstrated powerful results. In fact, as our key clinical research collaborators put it:

"Its high sensitivity, specificity, and translational relevance position it as an exceptional tool for clinical use. Given the clarity and consistency of the data it provides, I strongly advocate for its broader adoption and urge that it be rapidly prioritized for clinical validation to support improved patient outcomes."

PTSD and trauma-related illness have long been treated based on symptoms and subjective reports. But now, with RNA transcriptome analysis, we can assess it objectively—offering a novel approach for diagnosing, treating, and even preventing trauma-induced disease.

And today there is a promising patchwork of powerful therapies—mindfulness, contrast therapy, EMDR, neurofeedback, ketamine-assisted psychotherapy, or even psychedelics. But it's a "choose your own adventure" landscape for our veterans because we have lacked an objective compass.

TAI™ is that compass. We can use it to validate effectiveness of these modalities and track clinical progress. We are not starting from scratch here either and have already partnered with groundbreaking technology companies from hypobaric oxygen to virtual reality with exceptionally promising early results.

The VA has long pioneered technologies that went on to change the world. Let this be the next chapter—ushering in a new standard of precision mental health care that is proactive, data-driven, and life-saving.

iXpressGenes is a company born out of tragedy, led by those who've lived the reality of trauma, and built for a world finally ready to confront it. Let's lead the transformation of trauma care. Our Veterans deserve it—and so does every American still waiting for their suffering to be seen, understood, and treated with precision.

The opportunity is massive—The need is urgent and growing—But now, the science is ready.

Let us transform trauma care—together.

Thank you.