

OPENING STATEMENT  
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**of the Subcommittee on Research and Technology**

House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology  
Subcommittee Research and Technology  
Subcommittee on Energy  
*“Empowering U.S. Veterans through Technology”*  
May 22, 2018

Thank you Chairwoman Comstock for holding today’s hearing. Memorial Day is my busiest day of the year for public events in my district because of the importance my constituents and I place on honoring the men and women who serve in our armed forces. I’m sure my colleagues on both sides of the aisle in the subcommittees present this morning agree that supporting technologies that improve the lives of these men and women should be a high priority. Unfortunately many face an uphill battle to overcome the physical and mental toll of war once they return home. That’s why this hearing is so important. I want to thank our witnesses for being here to share with us their efforts to provide veterans with the latest technologies to improve their quality of life.

Almost 20 million U.S. veterans are living today and just under half are enrolled in the Department of Veterans Affairs’ health care system. The health records generated from decades of care provide a trove of information that may lead to more accurate diagnosis and treatment of certain conditions and diseases. High-performance computing can help analyze this massive amount of data to make it useful for delivering better healthcare outcomes not only for veterans but also for the general population. The federal government has made strategic investments over the years to advance data analytics and data science research and development. I look forward to hearing from Dr. Kusnezov about the progress of the Big Data Science Initiative being conducted by the VA and Department of Energy, some of which is taking place in my district at Argonne National Laboratory’s Leadership Computing Facility. I’d also like to hear about the privacy and security measures the agencies are taking to protect our veterans’ personal information.

In addition to the diseases and chronic conditions that the VA-DOE collaboration will address, veterans who survive combat may have to adapt to civilian life with limited mobility due to physical injuries sustained in war. A number of federal efforts support research in related areas, including advanced robotic prosthetics and full-body exoskeleton suits. For example, the National Science Foundation funds work examining the interface of brain and machine for mind control of robotic prosthetics. And the National Institute of Standards and Technology has established an international committee to bring together public and private sector stakeholders to define standards for wearable robotics.

While the physical wounds of war can be seen, the mental scars are below the surface. Combat and other traumatizing experiences may result in long-term damage for veterans. Homelessness and suicide may be manifestations of these mental wounds. 11 to 20 percent of veterans from the most recent combat operations suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder or PTSD. These figures are similar for Gulf War veterans, and, unfortunately, even greater, 30 percent, for

Vietnam veterans. I look forward to the witnesses' testimony about their efforts to provide physical and mental rehabilitation technologies to our deserving veterans who have already sacrificed so much for our nation. I also look forward to hearing the witnesses' ideas about what more the federal science agencies can be doing to accelerate the development of such technologies.

Thank you Madam Chair. I yield back.