

Chairman Roe, Ranking Member Walz, thank you for inviting me here today to speak on Members' Day.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak about an issue that is very important to my constituents. I began my career as a nurse, where I provided hands-on patient care for 15 years as a psychiatric nurse at the Veterans Administration Hospital in Dallas.

Veterans and their care is very important to me. And one thing I have noticed in my career both at the VA and here in Congress is the importance of

getting the payment to whoever is owed, whether that is the veteran, the physician or the contractor.

However, timely payment of care has been a problem for the VA for as long as I can remember.

Small business vendors depend on timely payments in order to plan their services, pay their employees and conduct the business they have agreed to perform for the price the VA has agreed to pay.

Your committee held a hearing on June 3, 2015 on this very issue. At that hearing, you heard from vendors who faced persistent difficulty in receiving payment from the VA for services relating to transportation of veterans regarding care at the VA.

I have been helping a constituent who has had multiple issues trying to get paid for services rendered for the health care of Dallas-area veterans. Numerous times my office has had to intervene when the VA refused to follow the guidelines spelled out in the contract.

Fee-basis care is preapproved by the VA and the veteran, VA facility and provider are all aware of the costs of the care being performed. There should not be a delay in delivering payment for essential services provided to the veteran.

I understand it is part of the job in order to help constituents, but it is maddening this problem

keeps coming up. My office has been in continuous contact with the local Dallas VA Medical Center, and it is slowly being resolved.

My concern is this slow walking of claims payments is endemic throughout the VA, and veterans are being held responsible for the delay. Not all contractors are as savvy as my constituent, and might not know what the next step should be to resolve their issues.

Thank you, Chairman Roe and Ranking Member Walz for holding this hearing today and listening to the concerns of all members.