Statement for the Record

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Beyond Go-Live: VA Electronic Health Record Modernization Status Update

AMVETS strongly supports the continued modernization of the Department of Veterans Affairs' electronic health record through the Oracle Health system. Veterans need a reliable, unified record that follows them from military service into VA care and gives their health care teams the information they need to deliver safe, coordinated treatment.

We have heard from AMVETS members across the country in communities where the new system has gone live. They are grateful for the change and believe it is providing better value. They are also excited for the next generation of service members, who should no longer have to navigate the same records-transfer challenges when moving from military service into VA care. Veterans who travel or receive care in different cities should be able to do so knowing their health information will follow them.

VA's aging legacy systems are not a sustainable long-term solution. Continuing to rely on outdated technology would perpetuate fragmented records and risk further delays and disruption for veterans and the clinicians who care for them. Switching vendors and starting over would also risk additional delay, added expense, and disruption to the facilities already using the modernized system. Veterans should not have to wait through another restart to get the care and coordination they deserve.

The answer is to fix problems, continue to hold VA and Oracle accountable, and continue moving forward. VA reports that the modernized system serves more than 780,000 veterans across 19 medical centers and 107 clinics. Those figures demonstrate the scale of the work already underway and the importance of getting it right for the veterans and staff who depend on it. Considering the magnitude of this undertaking, obstacles are inevitable. Nevertheless, Oracle has been dedicated to addressing issues as they arise by committing on-the-ground personnel to

gather feedback directly from veterans across the country to ensure that solutions are tailored to them where they live and how they live.

Oracle's recent update also describes progress in Indiana, where approximately 6,000 clinicians and staff serve more than 102,000 veterans. According to Oracle, more than 80 improvements informed by earlier deployments helped prepare the Indiana rollout. Oracle also reports a 99.95 percent success rate for prescription migration across sites. These are encouraging signs of learning and improvement that should be independently assessed and sustained as the program expands.

AMVETS also appreciates Oracle's efforts to keep the veteran community informed about the program's progress. In our experience, Oracle has gone above and beyond to engage veterans in a way we have not seen on other contractor-led VA medical center projects. That engagement helps ensure veterans' experiences are heard as the system is improved and deployed.

We are grateful that Oracle acquired Cerner. In AMVETS' view, the project has accelerated significantly since that acquisition. We encourage VA and Oracle to build on that momentum while remaining transparent about challenges and accountable for resolving them.

For veterans in the 21st century, the promise of modernization is critical: less repetition of medical histories, better coordination between providers, and a smoother transition from military to VA care. Delivering those benefits requires adequate training, dependable workflows, and clear support for veterans during each transition.

AMVETS urges Congress and VA to sustain this effort, insist on transparency and measurable improvements, and make veteran safety and the experience of frontline clinicians central to every deployment. Veterans have waited long enough for a modern health record. They deserve a system that works and the sustained commitment to deliver it.

National Executive Director, Joseph R. Chenelly

Joe Chenelly was appointed National Executive Director of AMVETS in May 2016, having previously served as the organization's National Communications Director. He is the first veteran of combat operations in the Global War on Terrorism to lead one of the nation's four largest veterans service organizations' staffs.

Chenelly is a U.S. Marine Corps combat veteran who served from 1998 to 2006, including deployments to Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Kuwait, and the Horn of Africa. He resides in Fairport, New York, with his wife and five children.

About AMVETS

AMVETS is the most inclusive congressionally chartered veterans service organization in the United States. Our membership is open to all active-duty service members, reservists, guardsmen, and honorably discharged veterans. As a result, AMVETS members have played a vital role in defending our nation in every conflict since World War II.

Our dedication to these men and women dates back to the post-World War II era, when countless returning service members sought access to the health, education, and employment benefits they had earned. Navigating the government bureaucracy to secure these benefits proved challenging for many, prompting experienced veterans to form local groups to assist their peers. As the veteran population surged into the millions, it became evident that a national organization was needed—one distinct from groups that had been established to serve veterans of previous wars. The emerging generation of veterans sought an organization of their own.

With this vision in mind, 18 delegates from nine veterans' clubs convened in Kansas City, Missouri, on December 10, 1944, to establish The American Veterans of World War II. Less than three years later, on July 23, 1947, President Harry S. Truman signed Public Law 216, officially recognizing AMVETS as the first congressionally chartered organization for post-World War II veterans.

Over the years, our congressional charter has been updated to welcome veterans from subsequent conflicts. AMVETS has also evolved to better meet the needs of newer generations of veterans and their families. To further this mission, we maintain partnerships with other congressionally chartered veterans' organizations as part of the "Big Six" coalition. Additionally, we collaborate with newer groups such as Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America and The Independence Fund. Our commitment to veterans' well-being is further demonstrated through our partnership with the VA's Office of Suicide Prevention and Mental Health, working to combat the tragic epidemic of veteran suicide.

As AMVETS looks toward the future, we remain steadfast in our dedication to serving those who have defended our nation. We urge the 119th Congress to join us in this commitment by making policy decisions and casting votes that protect and support our veterans.