



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
VETERANS' AFFAIRS
Chairman Phil Roe, M.D.

H.R. 3262: Grow Our Own Directive: Physician Assistant Employment and Education Act of 2016

Background:

VA's struggle to recruit, hire, and retain high-quality healthcare providers is well known and has been well covered by previous committee oversight. VA is the single largest employer of physician assistants (PAs) in the country, yet in the past two years, PAs have been identified as one of the top five professions where VA is experiencing the largest staffing shortages. Furthermore, the Veterans Affairs Physician Assistant Association (VAPAA) has called for targeted recruitment and retention programs to address PA staffing shortages and increase the number of PAs available to treat veteran patients across the VA health care system.

H.R. 3262 would direct VA to carry out the Grow Our Own Directive or G.O.O.D. pilot program to provide educational assistance to certain former members of the Armed Forces with medical or military health experience for education and training as VA physician assistants. The bill would also require VA to establish specified standards to improve the education and hiring of VA physician assistants and implement a national plan for the retention and recruitment of VA physician assistants that includes the adoption of competitive pay standards.

The Message:

- The VA health care system is suffering from staffing shortages, particularly for physician assistants.
- Physician assistants are a valuable asset to doctors and increase access to care for patients.
- This bill would create a pilot program to provide veterans with medical or military health experience the necessary education to become physician assistants at VA.
- Providing veterans with increased opportunities to pursue careers as physician assistants will benefit both veterans and patients receiving care.
- This legislation will also help address staffing shortages at VA facilities.