



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON **VETERANS' AFFAIRS**

Chairman Phil Roe, M.D.

H.R. 5864: the VA Hospitals Establishing Leadership Performance (VA HELP) Act

Background:

Currently, the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) utilizes two personnel systems (titles 5 and 38 in the United States Code, or U.S.C) to hire employees. The personnel system found in title 5 U.S.C. is used to competitively hire most employees at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and across the Federal government. The personnel system found in title 38 U.S.C. is used by VA to directly hire clinicians and certain support staff. Given the complexity in hiring using two personnel systems and the hiring challenges that VA has experienced in recent years, the Committee has become increasingly concerned that VHA Human Resource (HR) professionals do not have the necessary qualifications to adequately fulfill their obligations. This concern has been compounded by several Committee investigations which found VHA HR professionals with substandard educational and professional backgrounds - including one HR Director at a VA medical center who lacked both a college degree and relevant work experience.

H.R. 5864 would: (1) require VA, within 180 days of enactment, to establish qualification standards and performance metrics for VHA HR positions and provide a report to Congress containing such standards and metrics; (2) require GAO to submit a report to the House and Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs containing a description of the implementation and an assessment of the quality of such standards and metrics.

The Message:

- Veterans deserve to be treated by the best providers available, but VHA's complex hiring process and lack of HR expertise could hamper the hiring and retention of quality providers.
- Currently, VHA uses two systems for hiring personnel and lacks set qualification standards and performance metrics for HR professionals.
- This legislation will require VA to establish qualification standards and performance metrics for VHA HR positions.