



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
VETERANS' AFFAIRS
Republicans | Ranking Member Phil Roe, M.D.

H.R. 547: The Biological Implant Tracking and Veterans Safety Act

Background:

In January 2014, a Government Accountability Office (GAO) report found that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) does not use a standardized process for tracking biological tissue from cadaver donor to living veteran recipient. In the event of a recall, it would often be impossible to track down which patient received contaminated tissue.

The same GAO report detailed the Veterans Health Administration's (VHA) failure to consistently ensure they are purchasing tissue from biological implant vendors that have registered with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Additionally, the VHA does not maintain an inventory system to keep the expired tissues from remaining in storage alongside unexpired tissues. At least two companies that supply large amounts of human tissue to the VA have repeatedly received warnings from the FDA because they possess contaminated tissue and use sub-standard sterilization practices.

The Biological Implant Tracking and Veterans Safety Act directs the Secretary of VA to adopt the FDA's unique device identification system (UDI) for labeling of all biological implants and to implement an automated inventory system to ensure veterans do not receive expired or otherwise contaminated tissue.

The Message:

- Illegal trafficking in human tissue is a highly profitable criminal enterprise worldwide.
- The six million veterans served annually by the VHA have earned the highest standard of patient care in the country.
- The Biological Implant Tracking and Veterans Safety Act will ensure veterans do not receive contaminated tissue by requiring the VA to adopt the same system for tracking implants and tissue used within the private sector.
- This bill is just one step of many House Republicans are taking to bring accountability to the VA while ensuring our heroes receive the highest quality health care.