

VFW Applauds Obama's 21st Century Vision for VA

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WASHINGTON — The national commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. is applauding President Obama for his vision for a 21st century Department of Veterans Affairs that includes support of advanced funding legislation and a single, unified electronic medical record between the Defense Department and VA.

Glen M. Gardner Jr., a Vietnam veteran from Round Rock, Texas, said the president's vision tracks with key VFW legislative goals to ensure that America properly cares for her servicemembers, veterans and their families.

"A nation that creates veterans has a sacred responsibility to care for those veterans," said Gardner, who added that the VA has only started a new fiscal year with a fully funded budget once in the past 12 years.

"Advance funding does not diminish congressional oversight or the nature by which the discretionary process works. It just means Congress will prepare and appropriate the VA's healthcare budget a full year in advance, which is clearly a smarter and more efficient way for the nation's largest integrated healthcare system to conduct business," he said.

Senate VA Committee Chairman Daniel Akaka (D-Hawaii) and House VA Committee Chairman Bob Filner (D-Calif.) reintroduced advanced funding legislation into the 111th Congress – S. 423 and H.R. 1016, respectively. Now that the president also supports the legislation, the VFW national commander is urging his total membership of 2.2 million to contact their elected officials and urge them to sign on as co-sponsors, and to vote accordingly when the bills come up on the floor.

With regards to a single, unified electronic medical record, it will help ease the transition of millions of servicemen and women from DOD's rolls into the VA system, which will increase their access to care and benefits, while protecting personal privacy data.

"Money is not the answer to every problem," said Gardner, "but a budget that isn't sufficient, timely or predictable creates huge problems for a federal agency that essentially operates in the service industry. With advanced funding and a 21st century focus to improve

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

406 W. 34th Street
Kansas City, MO 64111
Office 816.756.3390
Fax 816.968.1157

WASHINGTON OFFICE

200 Maryland Ave., N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002
Office 202.543.2239
Fax 202.543.6719

info@vfw.org
www.vfw.org

electronic medical records, access to care and veteran homelessness issues, America's veterans of past, present and future will be properly cared for by a grateful nation.

"We look forward to working with the administration and Congress to make this vision a reality."

Contact your congressional members today and urge them to support S. 423 and H.R. 1016. For contact information, enter your Zip Code at: <http://capwiz.com/vfw/dbq/officials/>