

January 18, 2022

The Honorable Joe Manchin
U.S. Senate
306 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bill Cassidy
U.S. Senate
520 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jerry Moran
U.S. Senate
521 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins
U.S. Senate
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Boozman
U.S. Senate
141 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Manchin, Moran, Boozman, Cassidy, and Collins:

On behalf of the physician and medical student members of the American Medical Association (AMA), I am writing to share our support for the “Department of Veterans Affairs Provider Accountability Act” (S. 2041). This important legislation would direct the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to enforce the licensure requirements for medical providers within the VA. This crucial step would help to ensure that Veterans receive the care they deserve through the VA system.

In part, this bill would require the VA to compile, verify, and continuously monitor the professional licensures, certifications, and registrations of VA health care providers with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), National Practitioner Data Bank (NPDB), and the applicable state licensing boards. Additionally, the legislation would require that the VA conduct ongoing, retrospective, and comprehensive monitoring of the performance and quality of the health care delivered by each health care professional and report certain disciplinary information to the appropriate state licensing, registration, or certification body.

According to multiple Government Accountability Office (GAO) audits, the VA has been deficient in its supervision and oversight of health care providers. Over the past few years, the VA Office of the Inspector General has reported multiple cases of quality and safety concerns regarding VA providers.¹ The issues reported range from providers lacking appropriate qualifications to poor performance and provider misconduct.² Unfortunately, the VA has not taken action to improve its reporting and oversight.³ In October 2021, the GAO highlighted a range of concerns with the VA’s oversight and accountability of

¹ <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-20-152t.pdf>.

² [Id.](#)

³ [Id.](#)

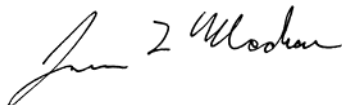
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its health care system, including concerns related to quality of care and patient safety.⁴ Also, VA medical center officials are not reviewing all of the providers for whom clinical care concerns were raised, and the VA is not taking appropriate adverse privileging actions.⁵ This includes certain VA medical centers not reporting providers to the NPDB or to state licensing boards as is required by current policy.⁶

We believe that this bill will help address the current failure of the VA to communicate disciplinary or adverse actions of VA-employed or VA-contracted health care professionals with their respective state licensing boards, and will aid state medical boards (and other licensing boards) in maintaining oversight of physicians and health care professionals working within the VA.

Thank you for your leadership on this issue. We look forward to working with you to achieve passage of the Department of Veterans Affairs Provider Accountability Act to improve the health care that is provided to our Veterans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James L. Madara". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "M".

James L. Madara, MD

⁴ <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-22-105474.pdf>.

⁵ <https://www.gao.gov/assets/710/702090.pdf>.

⁶ [Id.](#)