



**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**

September 22, 2014

The Honorable Bob McDonald  
Secretary of Veterans Affairs  
810 Vermont Avenue, Northwest  
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Veterans across the country deserve access to timely, quality health care. Transforming the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) from an outdated government bureaucracy to a 21<sup>st</sup> Century model of service and responsiveness is essential to achieving that goal. With this objective in mind, I write to express my support for the independent assessment required under the legislation that recently passed both the House and Senate, and to emphasize the importance of providing veterans with an evaluation that is both effective and truly independent.

As I and other House leaders told President Obama in a letter earlier this year, the VA is a system that needs to be fundamentally transformed in order to meet its mandate of service and care to our nation's veterans. I am encouraged the president has chosen as the new VA secretary a strong leader with decades of experience in the private sector, which is necessary to oversee the kind of dramatic change that is needed and long overdue.

As I know you are aware, the *Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act* (H.R. 3230) requires an independent assessment of the health care delivery systems and management processes at the VA. This top-to-bottom audit requires you to enter into a contract with one or more entities to examine every aspect of hospital care and medical services provided by the VA. The audit is a critical component of the new law and will help identify long-term reforms to improve the quality and access to care for our veterans.

The intent of the independent assessment is to gain valuable feedback that can be used to help transform the VA into an effective 21<sup>st</sup> Century model of service. Accordingly, it is critical that the review rely not on traditional government consultants, but on private sector entities with experience in the successful delivery of modern, quality health care.

Including private sector health care entities who may collectively benchmark their health systems with the VA will help identify variances between the strengths and weaknesses of the existing

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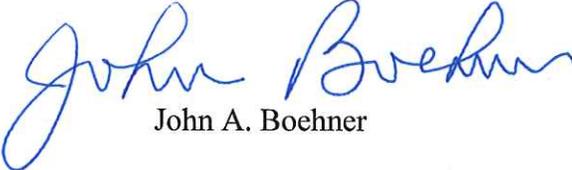
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systems. The entities should, of course, be recognized leaders of excellence in quality and timely health care delivery.

Congress acted to provide the VA with additional resources and the authority to hold senior officials accountable in the wake of the VA scandal. But passage of this law is just the beginning. The independent assessment is a step toward fully understanding the systemic problems and ultimately transforming the VA from top to bottom and into the system veterans deserve. It must be conducted by individuals who are both truly independent of the existing system and versed in the knowledge of how effective, modern health care delivery systems are run.

I look forward to your response as we work to improve the care and services our veterans deserve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John A. Boehner". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping "J" and "B".

John A. Boehner