

Leadership Fellow to Testify at Congressional Hearing on VA Care

WASHINGTON (February 1, 2016) – Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA) Georgia Leadership Fellow and retired U.S. Army Soldier [Duane Williams](#) will testify February 2 before the House Veterans Subcommittee on Health. Williams will present data culled from IAVA's 400,000+ membership base urging Congress to adopt a roadmap forward that will provide clarity and timely medical care to veterans through VA's Care in the Community program.

"While the establishment of the Choice Program in 2015 helped remove a good deal of confusion for veterans of how to obtain care, only five percent of IAVA's members reported taking advantage of the program," Williams will testify. "For the 95 percent of IAVA members who have not used the Choice Program, 43 percent reported this was due to sheer confusion. It is clear that simplification of how to access care through the Choice Program is still needed."

As Congress moves forward to simplify a confusing process for veterans, IAVA strongly recommends Congress work with VA and use [its plan](#) as the framework for legislation in order to avoid one-off proposals that are misinformed or put politics ahead of veterans. It was Congress who provided the numerous different plans for obtaining privatized care through the Choice Program. These had the unfortunate effect of adding to the confusion and inefficiencies which resulted in the need to consolidate care. IAVA recommends that Congress evaluate these mistakes and leverage the VA's plan as the framework for consolidation of care moving forward.

Williams chairs the Veterans Affairs Advisory Board of DeKalb County, Ga., which is responsible for the county's veteran recognition, advocacy and research programs on behalf of its 41,000 veterans. Williams previously testified for IAVA in October 2015 at a field hearing in Atlanta for the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee hearing on VA's Choice program. Williams full testimony can be found [here](#). Other testimony and statements can be viewed [here](#).

"IAVA is committed to remaining actively engaged in the success of these critical care programs," stated Matt Miller, IAVA Chief Policy Officer. "We are also pleased to have this opportunity to share the direct experiences of one of our top veteran leaders with the Health Subcommittee."

The House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Health hearing will be held Feb. 2 at 10 a.m., and will be streamed at [veterans.house.gov](#).