

# IAVA Responds to VA Sec McDonald's Press Announcement

**New York, NY (September 8, 2014)** – Today, Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Secretary Robert McDonald spoke to the press about his response to the ongoing VA scandal and announced his reform plan, “The Road to Veterans Day,” to fix alleged wrongdoings across VA facilities and hospitals.

The plan is presented as a three-pronged strategy:

1. Rebuilding trust with veterans and other stakeholders
2. Improving service delivery focusing on veterans outcomes, access and care
3. Setting the course for longer-term excellence and reform

Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA), praises the Secretary for his leadership and continues to urge the VA to support the Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention For American Veterans (Clay Hunt SAV Act), H.R. 5059.

IAVA CEO and Founder Paul Rieckhoff released the following statement:

“In his first few weeks, Secretary McDonald has continued to show veterans he has our back,” said Rieckhoff. “His recent visits to VA hospitals and facilities exemplify his commitment to changing the status quo at the VA. This hands on leadership and strategic plan is exactly what the VA needs after a summer of scandal and broken trust. But there is still a very, very long road ahead before IAVA members see a real turnaround on the ground in their hometowns. The VA’s trust with veterans has been badly broken. IAVA’s members now expect congress, the President, and the VA to rebuild that trust. Supporting our community is not about single actions or speeches with empty promises. We hope the Secretary will continue to tackle critical veterans issues and make veteran suicide a priority. IAVA also urges the Secretary to put his influence behind the Clay Hunt SAV Act. We need his and the VA’s support, especially during Suicide Prevention Month.”