



**Veteran Affairs Physician Assistant Association, Inc.**

October 5, 2015

Dear Senator Tester,

On behalf of the Veterans Affairs Physician Assistant Association (VAPAA), a constituent organization of the American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA), VAPAA fully supports "Grow Our Own Directive: Physician Assistant Employment and Education Act of 2015." With the recent issues of providing timely access of care for Veterans this legislation will improve access and quality of care for Veterans especially in the underserved and rural areas.

Physician Assistants provide high quality and cost effective medical care. Providing educational assistance, establishing pay grades, including PAs in the locality pay act, and establishing standards to improve and provide accountability of the VA's use of educational funds will immediately address the issues of retention and recruitment problems with Physician Assistants in the VA system.

VAPAA strongly supports this bill in creating educational and employment opportunities for the next generation of Veterans, who are returning combat medics and corpsmen and in improving the retention the recruitment of PAs in the VA system.

The PA profession came into existence in the mid- 1960's due to the shortage of primary care physicians in the United States. The first classes of Physician Assistants to graduate from PA programs were all former Army medics and Navy Corpsmen who served in the Vietnam War. They wanted to apply their knowledge and experience in a civilian role and to increase access to care for patients in the rural and underserved areas. The PA profession was born from the military and we need to continue that special relationship.

Veteran Affairs Physician Assistant Association greatly appreciates your time, concern, and dedication to this matter and to serving our nation's Veterans.

Sincerely,

Rubina DaSilva PA-C  
President, Veteran Affairs Physician Assistant Association

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