



August 28, 2023

The Honorable Jon Tester
Chair, Veterans' Affairs Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Ranking, Veterans' Affairs Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Tester and Moran,

On behalf of the Home Care Association of America (HCAOA), we are grateful for everything you and your staff of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs do for our nation's veterans. Several months ago, the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee chose to exclude Section 3 of the Elizabeth Dole Home Care Act (S.141) due to the high CBO score of nearly \$25 billion. Recently, the CBO rescored Section 3, and significantly decreased its estimate to \$174 million over ten years. HCAOA and other advocacy organizations asked for this recalculation and because the cost has been significantly reduced, we are asking for your support to restore Section 3 of the Dole Act and ensure its inclusion in any attempt to pass S. 141 in the Senate.

Section 3 would permit veterans to receive the care they need while remaining in their own homes. Under the current law, the Department of Veterans' Affairs is prohibited from funding home care in a veteran's home in an amount equal to institutional care – even if it is more than 30 percent cheaper! The Dole Act would lift this restriction and allow our veterans to remain in their own homes at a cost equal to being cared for in a nursing home. Expanding the current cap beyond 65% of institutional care will protect access to care for our veterans and improve their overall health outcomes as they age. This will reduce unnecessary hospitalizations and other negative medical interactions and ultimately provide cost savings to the VA and the federal government.

I would also like to draw your attention to Section 8 of the Dole Act, which calls for a *three-year pilot program in communities where there is a shortage of home health aides, to hire nursing assistants as new employees of the Department of Veteran Affairs or reassign nursing assistants who are existing employees to provide veterans in-home care services*. While we understand the need to ensure access to in-home care, especially with the current direct care worker shortage, we urge the Committee to examine language requiring the Department to first consider VA-credentialed home care agencies because they not only employ home care aides, but they also provide supervision, quality assurance, training, and compliance with state regulations.

The HCAOA is extremely appreciative of your leadership on issues impacting our Veteran community and will continue its strong advocacy to pass this important legislation. Please feel free to contact me at vicki@hcaoa.org or phone at 202-519-2961.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Vicki Hoak", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Vicki Hoak, CEO
Home Care Association of America