

**STATEMENT BY  
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5 Minute Oral Statement**

**BEFORE THE**

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON DEFENSE**

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**DEFENSE HEALTH PROGRAM**

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Chairman Durbin, Ranking Member Cochran, and distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for this opportunity to tell the Army Medicine story.

On behalf of the nearly 156,000 dedicated Soldiers and Civilians that comprise Army Medicine, I extend our appreciation to Congress for your continued support.

Recently, our Nation felt the weight of another tragedy at one of our military posts.

My heart goes out to the families for their loss.

The survivors, their families, and the entire Fort Hood community are demonstrating courage and resilience through these difficult times.

We are supporting and tracking the progress of the survivors, providing longitudinal care and support throughout recovery, just as we continue to do for those impacted by the 2009 Fort Hood tragedy.

I am extremely proud of the teamwork, support, and compassion displayed – it is a Total Army effort.

I want to thank the members of this committee who have reached out to our Soldiers, Families, and community at Fort Hood.

I want to also recognize the Army's 32,000 Soldiers deployed to Afghanistan, the additional 120,000 Soldiers deployed in support of our National Defense Strategy, and their families for their strength and foundation.

We continue to optimize health and expand our reach, truly focusing on the Total Army Force – Active, Guard, and Reserve.

Today, I am happy to report that this hard work is showing results in moving towards a System **for** Health.

- Our medical and dental readiness levels are the highest since 2001.
- Behavioral healthcare has increased from 900,000 encounters in 2007 to almost 2 million in 2013.
- Since embedding behavioral health in our brigades, Soldiers accessed outpatient behavioral healthcare more frequently, had fewer acute crises, and required approximately 25,000 fewer inpatient psychiatric bed days in 2013 compared to 2012.

- Through expanded use of complementary therapies, integrated pain management, and clinical pharmacists in our medical homes, we saw a decrease in polypharmacy of almost 50 percent.
- Our Performance Triad of healthy sleep, activity, and nutrition is spreading across our Total Army Force.
- And at our Army Wellness Centers, 62 percent of the individuals followed saw a 4 percent decrease in their Body Mass Index and a 15 percent increase in cardiovascular fitness.

These successes are due to a comprehensive system of care that extends from a deployed environment, across our medical commands, into the Lifespace.

This translates to better health, improved readiness, lower healthcare costs, and a stronger Army.

But there is more we must do.

As a leader, I get asked “what keeps me up at night?”

- I worry about the long-term repercussions of these wars on our Veterans.
- I worry about sexual assault and sexual harassment occurring across our Nation and DoD.
- I fear that in times of dynamic uncertainty, our military hospitals are viewed through the lens of a civilian healthcare system.
- I worry that our Nation does not fully understand the model of combat care, and the vital connection between the battlefield and our military hospitals as readiness platforms for skill sustainment.
- I worry about losing the science and technology that has accelerated medical advances, giving the

American public confidence to allow their sons and daughters to serve.

I'm concerned that Army Medicine is viewed through an optic that is not wide enough to appreciate that we train more than 35,000 students annually at AMEDD Center and School, and have almost 1,500 physicians in graduate medical education where our board pass-rates are higher than the national average.

I'm concerned that our nurse anesthesia program, which ranks number 1 in the Nation, and our physical therapy doctoral program, which ranks 5<sup>th</sup> nationally, remain connected to our readiness platforms.

Our wartime lessons-learned led to more than 30 evidence-based military clinical practice guidelines – saving lives and improving outcomes.

During the last 10 years there have been over 450 patent applications for inventions that involved our Medical Research and Materiel Command, our labs, and our hospitals.

We are more than healthcare providers in a hospital.

We are a robust, interconnected system that has accelerated research, academics, and medical innovation for our Nation.

As we go through times of dynamic uncertainty, we must preserve these medical capabilities to meet our Nation's mission.

What's at stake is **NOT** the day to day care, but our ability to respond to future missions at the level we have over these last 13 years.

We must aggressively sustain our readiness platform, and maintain trust with the American people.

Though we live in uncertain times, one thing is certain - a healthy, resilient, and ready Army will be – as it always has been – the strength of our Nation.

I want to thank my partners in the DoD, the VA, my colleagues here on the panel today, and the Congress, for your continued support.

The Army Medicine Team is proudly

**Serving** to Heal, and **Honored** to Serve.