

**Chairman Thad Cochran Opening Statement
Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense**

**Hearing to Review the Defense Health Program and Military Medicine Funding
March 29, 2017**

(As prepared for delivery)

Good morning, the subcommittee will come to order. Today, we are receiving testimony on the military health system and the medical readiness of our servicemembers. We are pleased to welcome:

- Lieutenant General Nadja West, Surgeon General of the Army;
- Vice Admiral Forrest Faison, Surgeon General of the Navy;
- Lieutenant General Mark Ediger, Surgeon General of the Air Force; and
- Ms. Stacy Cummings, Program Executive Officer of the Defense Healthcare Management Systems.

Our military has made great strides in areas ranging from medical research breakthroughs to expedited treatment and medical evacuations off the battlefield. We are particularly proud of the work performed by the 81st Medical Group flying out of Keesler Air Force Base.

This morning, the Committee would like to learn more about the Department's progress on implementing its new electronic health record system, and its integration with the Department of Veterans Affairs and private healthcare providers.

We are aware the Department began deployment of its new electronic health record system in February at Fairchild Air Force Base in Washington. The Committee looks forward to hearing about the success of this program thus far, and to understanding its future challenges.

We appreciate your testimony today and applaud your efforts to increase medical readiness and provide quality healthcare to our service members, their families, and military retirees.

Now I turn to the Vice Chairman, Senator Durbin, for his opening remarks.

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