

**Chairman Richard Shelby Opening Statement
Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense**

Hearing to Review the FY2019 Budget Request for the Defense Health Program

April 26, 2018

(As prepared for delivery)

Good morning, the Subcommittee will come to order.

I am pleased to welcome our distinguished panel to review the funding request for the military health system and medical readiness of our servicemembers: 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.

This committee supports the advancements that our military has made in treating our wounded. From quicker treatment of injuries and medical evacuations from the battlefield, to medical research breakthroughs and technology-assisted remote care.

Last year, the Department deployed its new electronic health records system at four sites in the Pacific Northwest. The goals of this program are to provide better quality of care and a better value to the taxpayer by achieving an integrated electronic health record for servicemembers, veterans, and their families.

The Department of Defense recently initiated a review of the program and we look forward to hearing an update on what challenges remain ahead to improve coordination with the Department of Veterans Affairs and private health care providers.

We hope to hear more about your priorities and work to improve medical readiness and provide quality healthcare to our servicemembers and their families.

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

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