



THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

MAY 28 2014

MEMORANDUM FOR DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS
ACTING UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR PERSONNEL
AND READINESS

SUBJECT: Military Health System Review

Our Service members and their families deserve the highest quality health care possible wherever they are stationed or deployed. In recent years, the Department has made great improvements in our health care delivery system – nowhere more important than in improving trauma care, which has resulted in the highest ever survival rate from battlefield injuries.

It is our continuing obligation to those who serve, and all beneficiaries of the Military Health System (MHS), to continually review and improve our standards of care and the system that delivers that care. To ensure that we are meeting these standards, I am directing a 90-day comprehensive review (“Review”) of the MHS, effective immediately.

The Review will be led by Deputy Secretary of Defense Bob Work, with the assistance of the Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness and the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs, and the direct participation of the Secretaries of the Military Departments and the Service Chiefs. In addition, I have asked Deputy Secretary Work to solicit the perspectives of outside experts in the areas of patient safety and quality care, and perform the Review in a fully transparent manner.

The Review will focus on the following core areas:

- **Access to Health Care:** The Department has issued clear guidance and standards for access to health care, based on the urgency of the care a patient requires. In addition, the Department has issued standards to ensure that patients will not have to travel excessive distances to receive required care. The Review will assess whether or not the MHS is meeting these standards on a facility-by-facility basis. If a particular standard is not being met, the Review will provide a recommendation on how to meet or exceed that standard along with an associated timeline.
- **Safety of Care:** The Review will recommend ways to improve patient safety across the MHS by: (1) examining existing patient safety data; and (2) identifying best practices for patient safety from across the health care provider spectrum.
- **Quality of Care:** The Review will assess whether the quality of care provided by MHS meets DoD and nationally accepted standards. If MHS is found to be falling short of these standards in any particular area of care, the Review will provide specific recommendations for improvement.



A Plan of Action and Milestones for conducting the Review shall be delivered to me by June 6, 2014. I want regular updates on the progress of this review. A final report, complete with specific recommendations to address standards of care and implementation timelines, will be delivered to me no later than August 29, 2014.

The Department must continue to provide the best available health care to our Service men and women, and their families, who have sacrificed so much on behalf of this Nation. They deserve nothing short of our highest level of effort. Accordingly, I fully expect the Review to lead to Departmental standards that exceed the national averages in access to, safety, and quality of health care.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chuck Hagel". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single blue line.

cc:
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
Chiefs of the Military Services
Chief of the National Guard Bureau
General Counsel of the Department of Defense
Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs
Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs
Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs