

**Chairman C.W. Bill Young**  
**Subcommittee on Defense**  
**House Committee on Appropriations**  
**Fiscal Year 2014 Defense Health Program Budget Hearing**  
**April 24, 2013**  
**Opening Statement As Prepared**

---

The subcommittee will come to order.

This morning, the subcommittee will hold an open hearing on the fiscal year 2014 budget request for the Defense Health Program.

I would like to welcome the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs, Dr. Jonathan Woodson; the Surgeon General of the Army, Lieutenant General Patricia Horoho; the Surgeon General of the Navy, Vice Admiral Matthew Nathan; and the Surgeon General of the Air Force, Lieutenant General Thomas Travis. I would also like to mention that while Dr. Woodson, General Horoho, and Admiral Nathan are veterans at testifying to the subcommittee, General Travis is making his first appearance before us. General, welcome; we are very interested to hear what you have to say.

Over the past year we have all heard talk of fiscal cliffs and challenges, sequestration, continuing resolutions, reductions, cuts, and furloughs. It is sad that in the media, these discussions have largely displaced news of the actions of our brave servicemembers. Because, despite all of the economic turmoil we are facing, our servicemen and women continue to unfailingly defend this Nation and for that we are grateful. We remain committed to providing the very best in medical care to our servicemen and women who put their lives on the line for us each and every day.

However, as has been the case for the last several years, the Department faces a tremendous challenge with the growing cost and long term sustainability of the Military Health System. Military health care costs have risen from \$19 billion in fiscal year 2001 to approximately \$49 billion in the fiscal year 2014 budget request. However, this budget request assumes savings associated with several controversial TRICARE benefit cost sharing proposals; proposals that must ultimately be approved by Congress. I am interested to hear more about these proposals today.

Additionally, the subcommittee remains concerned about continued high numbers of suicides and the ability of the Department to provide mental health counseling and readjustment support for our servicemembers returning from deployments. It is imperative for the Department to get to the heart of the issues that servicemembers and their families face during and after deployments. The Committee is anxious to hear about what progress the Department has made in the past year with regard to psychological health, traumatic brain injury, and suicide prevention; and what this subcommittee can do to assist in making further advances in the coming fiscal year.

So welcome – I look forward to your testimony and to an informative question and answer session. Now before we hear your testimony, I would like to turn to my good friend and partner, Ranking Member Pete Visclosky, for any comments he may want to make.

#####