

**NINETY-EIGHTH NATIONAL CONVENTION  
OF  
THE AMERICAN LEGION  
Cincinnati, Ohio  
August 30, 31, September 1, 2016**

**Resolution No. 115: Department of Veterans Affairs Recruitment and Retention  
Origin: Maryland  
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation**

WHEREAS, The American Legion has consistently been concerned with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) leadership, physicians and medical specialist staffing shortages within the Veterans Health Administration (VHA); and

WHEREAS, Since The American Legion's System Worth Saving (SWS) program's inception in 2003, The American Legion has tracked and reported staffing shortages at every VA medical facility across the country and shares those reports with Congress, VA Central Office (VACO), and the President of the United States; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes that access to basic health-care services offered by qualified primary care, specialty care, and mental health-care providers should be available locally as often as possible; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion's SWS 2014 executive summary found that several VA medical centers continue to struggle to fill critical leadership positions across multiple departments; and

WHEREAS, These gaps have caused communication breakdowns between medical center leadership and staff that work within these departments; and

WHEREAS, On January 30, 2015, the VA's Office of Inspector General (VAOIG) released their determination of the "Veterans Health Administration's Occupational Staffing Shortages," as required by Section 301, of the "Veterans Access Choice and Accountability Act (VACAA) of 2014"; and

WHEREAS, VAOIG's report determined that the five occupations with the largest staffing shortages were medical officers, nurses, physician assistants, physical therapists, and psychologists; and

WHEREAS, VHA is still struggling to achieve the appropriate balance of primary care and medical specialists across the country; and

WHEREAS, If the VA continues to struggle with retention and recruitment, the trend of closures (or continued closures) for multiple departments within VA medical centers nationwide will continue; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Cincinnati, Ohio, August 30, 31, September 1, 2016, That The American Legion support legislation addressing the recruitment and retention challenges that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has regarding pay disparities among those physicians and medical specialists who are providing direct health care to our nation's veterans; and, be it further**

**RESOLVED, That the Veterans Health Administration continue to develop and implement staffing models for critical need occupations; and, be it finally**

**RESOLVED, That VA work more comprehensively with community partners when struggling to fill critical shortages within VA's ranks.**