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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

VA Audit Confirms American Legion Concerns About Wait Times

WASHINGTON (June 9, 2014) -- American Legion National Commander Daniel M. Dellinger pointed to data just released today by the Department of Veterans Affairs as confirmation that the problems plaguing VA are widespread but fixable with proper leadership and appropriate resources.

"The VA should be commended for conducting this audit and for additional action announced by Acting Secretary Sloan Gibson," Dellinger said. "The fact that more than 57,000 patients – a population equal to that of Ocala, Florida – have waited more than 90 days for initial appointments is disgraceful. Even worse, is that an additional 64,000 enrolled over the past 10 years have been unable to get appointments. This is not just 'gaming the system.' It's Russian Roulette and veterans are dying because of the bureaucracy."

Dellinger said that Gibson's order to establish a new patient satisfaction measurement program, hold senior leaders accountable, increase transparency and remove 14-day scheduling goals from employee performance contracts are positive steps.

"The President and Congress must also provide VA the resources it needs to succeed," Dellinger said. "We have said from the beginning that Phoenix was not an isolated case. The VA problems are widespread. The American Legion is listening and the American people are watching. This is not political. Making VA accessible and accountable to our nation's veterans is a moral imperative. The American Legion stands by ready to assist VA in living up to our obligation to those who have worn the uniform."

With a current membership of 2.4-million wartime veterans, The American Legion was founded in 1919 on the four pillars of a strong national security, veterans affairs, Americanism, and youth programs. Legionnaires work for the betterment of their communities through nearly 14,000 posts across the nation.

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