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| June 29, 2016 | 202-224-6244 |

**Heller Highlights Legislation to Improve Veterans’** **Health Care at Committee Hearing****(Washington, DC)** –Today, U.S. Senator Dean Heller (R-NV) spoke at a Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs hearing, highlighting his legislation to improve veterans’ experience with health care. The legislation, S.3035, requires the VA to carry out a pilot program for the contract hiring of medical scribes so that physicians can spend more time with their veteran patients and improve the quality of every Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care appointment. Click [HERE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rKtDUiQrj0s&feature=youtu.be) or below to watch.

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| **Background:** Recently, Senators Heller and Jon Tester (D-MT) teamed up to introduce bipartisan legislation honoring our veterans by helping improve the quality of VA health care.**Issue:** Veterans are experiencing long appointment wait times and less time with their VA doctor for a variety of reasons, but in part due to high patient load and not enough doctors to serve the population. This shortage is a nationwide problem, but in particular it impacts the VA because there are fewer recruitment and retention tools available to the VA compared to the private sector.**Legislative Solution:** Require the VA to carry out an 18-month pilot program in up to five VA medical centers for the contract hiring of medical scribes to assist VA physicians with workload. This bill ensures doctors have more time to see veteran patients rather than enter medical data.  It will also serve as a recruitment tool for doctors who want an employment package comparable to the private sector.**What is a medical scribe?** A medical scribe is an individual trained and hired to enter information into the electronic health record or chart at the direction of a physician or practitioner. A scribe can be found in multiple settings, including physician practices, hospitals, emergency departments, long-term care facilities, long-term acute care hospitals, public health clinics, and ambulatory care centers.**Benefits of Medical Scribes:*** Reduces the amount of time a physician must capture and enter data during a patient’s visit and increases the time they have to see patients, which can improve both quality of care and timeliness of care.
* Physicians often request scribes as part of their employment package, so the use of scribes can serve as a VA recruitment and retention tool in a system that struggles greatly with this issue due to the competitive advantage of the private sector.
* Improves the quality of electronic health records because scribes can devote the time to detailed documentation.

The legislation is supported by the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Disabled American Veterans, and the American Legion. ### |

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