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**Heller and Manchin to Congress: Pass Our Bill to Protect Veterans from Dangerous Medical Providers***New GAO Report Confirms that VA Concealed Mistakes Made by Providers*

**Washington, D.C.** – Following the release of a Government Accountability Office (GAO) [report](https://www.gao.gov/assets/690/688378.pdf) that found the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) failed to report poorly-performing medical providers, U.S. Senators Dean Heller (R-NV) and Joe Manchin (D-WV) today urged the Senate to swiftly take action on their bipartisan legislation that stops the VA from concealing providers’ medical mistakes.

[According to the GAO](https://www.gao.gov/assets/690/688378.pdf), the VA failed to report 90 percent of poor-performing medical providers to a national database designed to prevent them from crossing state lines and endangering patients elsewhere. The GAO report’s findings are in line with a [USA Today investigation](http://www.rgj.com/story/news/2017/10/11/va-conceals-shoddy-care-and-health-workers-mistakes/739852001/) that prompted Heller and Manchin to introduce [the VA Provider Accountability Act](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=A161109E-42C5-4CBF-B2D4-923E9B6D3697).

[The VA Provider Accountability Act](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=A161109E-42C5-4CBF-B2D4-923E9B6D3697) addresses issues raised in the GAO report by requiring the VA to report major adverse actions to the National Practitioner Data Bank and state licensing boards. It will also prohibit the VA from signing settlements with fired or dismissed VA employees that allow the VA to conceal serious medical errors or purge negative records from personnel files.

“The nonpartisan GAO’s findings are truly shocking, worrisome, and downright reprehensible. America’s military veterans deserve the world-class medical care that they have rightfully earned, and by medical workers who uphold the VA’s mission statement. It is a shame the GAO has found that the VA has not been forthcoming when it comes to reporting poor-performing doctors to the National Practitioner Data Bank and state licensing boards, and that’s why Congress must immediately pass the VA Provider Accountability Act,” **said** **Heller, a senior member of the U.S. Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee**. “This report is further evidence that we must enact my bipartisan legislation that holds the VA’s feet to the fire so that the veterans the agency exists to serve have trust in their caretakers. Congress must now act swiftly to help ensure that our military veterans are not at risk of receiving unsafe care from poor-performing and dangerous medical professionals and ensure these individuals are held accountable outside the VA system.”

“This GAO report, like the USA Today report that preceded it, is disturbing and shows a pattern of incompetence that could hurt both VA and non-VA patients. While I appreciate that VA is making attempts to correct this on their own, I believe these improvements in accountability measures need to be codified. I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to push this important piece of legislation through quickly,” **said Manchin.**

Senators Heller and Manchin introduced the VA Provider and Accountability Act last month after a [USA Today investigation recently revealed the VA has for years repeatedly buried and concealed poor care and mistakes made by its medical workers](https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2017/10/11/va-conceals-shoddy-care-and-health-workers-mistakes/739852001/).

The VA Provider Accountability Act is cosponsored by Senator Cassidy and supported by Paralyzed Veterans of America and the Federation of State Medical Boards.

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