

November 28th, 2018

Richard Stone, M.D.  
Executive in Charge, Veterans Health Administration  
Department of Veterans Affairs  
810 Vermont Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Doctor Stone,

The National Military and Veterans Alliance, a non-partisan advocacy group comprised of the undersigned military and veteran service organizations, writes to recommend that the VA establish a permanent Caregiver designation for our most catastrophically disabled veterans and establish, and enforce, national eligibility standards for the Caregiver program, that apply to both initial eligibility determinations and to the annual eligibility reevaluations.

Two veterans have recently experienced significant problems with the Caregiver program. One veteran was downgraded from Tier 3 Caregiver status to Tier 1 and the other was completely dropped from the program after appealing a reduction from Tier 3 to Tier 1. Both cases occurred at the Nashville VA Medical Center.

We do not believe these are isolated cases. In fact, we hear similar stories from distraught caregivers and veterans who have suddenly found themselves without financial support or health insurance due to inexplicable determinations by VA officials. The VA has stated that these cases are a unique deviation from established policy. However, these deviations appear to be becoming the norm and indicate serious problems with the management of the program.

The expansion of the Caregiver program mandated by the MISSION Act provides the Department the ability to rectify these issues. The NMVA believes that the implementation of our recommendations will significantly improve a caregiver's ability to manage the day to day challenges of providing care to disabled veterans. Furthermore, the implementation of these recommendations now would significantly contribute to eliminating these issues before they affect more veterans.

NMVA welcomes the opportunity to help fix what could become a widespread issue and looks forward to further to further advocacy in this regard. We thank you for your leadership and your support of America's military and its veterans.

Sincerely,



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## **National Military and Veterans Alliance Member Organizations Supporting Your Legislation**

American Military Society  
American Retirees Association  
AMVETS  
Armed Forces Marketing Council  
Armed Forces Retirees Association  
Army and Navy Union  
Association of the United States Navy  
The Independence Fund  
Military Order of Foreign Wars  
Military Order of the Purple Heart  
Military Order of World Wars  
Reserve Officers Association  
The Retired Enlisted Association  
Society of Military Widows