

THE AMERICAN LEGION, DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN

RESOLUTION: 08-17-C
SUBMITTED BY: The American Legion, Department of Michigan
SUBJECT: VA Involvement in the Department of Homeland Security

RESOLUTION

- WHEREAS, The Department of Homeland Security provides a single source of authority, at the highest level, for all homeland defense programs and policies; and
- WHEREAS, The role of the Department of Homeland Security is to coordinate national strategy to strengthen protection against terrorist threats or attacks; and
- WHEREAS, One of the critical missions of the Department of Homeland Security is emergency preparedness and response "to minimize the damage and recover from future terrorist attacks;" and
- WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical system serves as a primary back up to the Department of Defense (DoD) in the event of military casualties; and
- WHEREAS, VA and DoD have a Contingency Hospital System Plan as part of the Federal Emergency Management Agency; and
- WHEREAS, VA is prepared to augment the DoD's network of hospital and health care facilities in the event of a crisis, with 155 medical centers and a significant medical staff, many of whom are veterans; and
- WHEREAS, VA also acts as a federal support organization during major disasters, as one of four partners in the National Disaster Medical System; and
- WHEREAS, VA provided medical and psychological support to those in need during the months following the September 11, 2001, attack; and

WHEREAS, VA also maintains radiological response teams and decontamination systems should radioactive materials ever be used; and

WHEREAS, VA manages the largest health care program and is the largest medical education and health professional training program in the United States; and

WHEREAS, VA is a federal presence in virtually every local community in the country; and

WHEREAS, VA has the ability to move health care professionals to the site of a disaster and provide medical care quickly and efficiently; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes that the contingency plan for disasters developed by VA and DoD should be integrated as a part of the primary health care procedures of Homeland Security; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion, Department of Michigan, in annual Department Convention assembled in Grand Rapids, Michigan, June 19-22, 2008, That The American Legion urge Congress and the Administration to include VA in all strategic planning of the Department of Homeland Security; and, be it

FINALLY RESOLVED, That Congress take into account any additional requirements of VA as a result of involvement in Homeland Security obligations when developing VA's annual budget.