

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

CHAIRMAN MIKE BOST

H.R. 608: The Department of Veterans Affairs Electronic Health Record Modernization Termination Act

Background:

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has implemented the Oracle Cerner electronic health record (EHR) system at five of 171 medical centers since 2018, expending roughly \$5 billion. Last year, an independent life cycle cost estimate found that the cost to implement the system had more than doubled, from \$16.1 billion over 10 years to between \$33.6 and \$38.9 billion over 13 years. Additionally, VA acknowledges the system has created unacceptable levels of productivity losses, patient safety risks, and staff burnout at these five small and medium-sized facilities. In a recent user survey by KLAS Research, 78 percent of Oracle Cerner EHR users in VA disagreed or strongly disagreed that the system enables them to deliver high quality care—the lowest rating for any EHR system surveyed.

Implementation of the Oracle Cerner EHR system at additional sites has been paused through June 2023. If VA and Oracle Cerner are unable to improve the EHR system significantly, it should be terminated. *The VA Electronic Health Record Modernization Termination Act* would, within 180 days, abolish the Electronic Health Record Modernization Integration Office, transfer remaining activities to the Veterans Health Administration or Office of Information and Technology, revert all medical centers using the Oracle Cerner EHR to VA's existing EHR platform: the Veterans Health Information Systems and Technology Architecture (VistA), and gradually wind down the Oracle Cerner contract by preventing the Secretary from exercising options.

The Message:

- VA has spent roughly \$5 billion of taxpayer money to implement the Oracle Cerner EHR system at five medical centers, where it has badly disrupted operations for veterans and VA providers.
- If the Oracle Cerner EHR system cannot significantly improve, it should be terminated, before \$5 billion spent multiplies to nearly \$39 billion and veteran care continues to be negatively impacted by the failing system.
- If the Oracle Cerner EHR system must be terminated, VA will continue to rely on the VistA platform for the time being, which gets the third highest rating in the KLAS user survey.