**MOPH Joins the DAV in Challenge for Urgent VA Reforms**

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SPRINGFIELD, Va.–([BUSINESS WIRE](http://www.businesswire.com/))–At the 2015 National Convention of Disabled American Veterans (DAV), National Legislative Director Joy Ilem spoke about the need for the U.S. Government to act NOW to fix the VA, and explained why Veteran Service Organizations need to join the call for VA reforms to be implemented immediately before time runs out for the veterans it is meant to serve.

The Military Order of the Purple Heart applauds and salutes the DAV for focusing attention on the need to address the long-term problems plaguing the VA, rather than continuing to apply Band-Aids to a rapidly aging infrastructure. Symptomatic of endemic budget shortfalls, the VA informed Congress last month that it was not only running out of money to pay for local, community-based clinics, but may even have to curtail some larger hospital operations. “Despite a record breaking year of hearings by the House Veterans’ Affairs Committee, the VA continues to be plagued by fiscal failures related to leasing issues, budget overruns for major construction projects, poor program management and lack of accountability. The result is that Congress has been hesitant to give VA more money without seeing real reforms first.” Unfortunately, it is the very veterans they are supposed to serve who suffer the consequences.

According to the DAV, “the VA is at a crossroads, and the patience of Congress is wearing thin. The new business and management changes that VA Secretary Bob McDonald is working on are not happening fast enough for some, and new proposals are coming out seemingly every day debating what the future course of VA should be, including downsizing the VA, requiring veterans to seek all routine care outside the VA, and sending veterans out to find needed services on their own in the private health care market.” The DAV warns that “these type of proposals would fracture the comprehensive model of care that veterans can and do receive today — and even risk eliminating VA as a direct provider of care altogether.”

The MOPH lends its wholehearted support to the framework proposed last month by the DAV to “rebuild, restructure, realign and reform” the VA health care system. “**First:** Rebuild VA’s capacity to provide timely, high-quality care with a long-term strategy to recruit, hire and retain enough clinical and support staff to meet the true demand for care. **Second:** Restructure and consolidate VA’s community care programs into a single extended-care network that incorporates the best features of all existing care programs — including the Choice program — with a separate and guaranteed funding mechanism. **Third:** Realign and expand VA health care services to meet the diverse needs of future veterans, including women veterans and those who reside in rural and remote regions far from VA facilities. And,**Fourth:** Reform VA’s culture and management by increasing transparency, accountability and oversight.”

The MOPH joins in the call for Congress and VA leadership to work together to resolve the complex problems that exist, and to create a system that reflects our country’s true commitment to those who served and sacrificed to defend the land of the free and the home of the brave.

The organization now known as the [“Military Order of the Purple Heart of the U.S.A. Inc.,”](http://cts.businesswire.com/ct/CT?id=smartlink&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.purpleheart.org&esheet=51166706&newsitemid=20150820005603&lan=en-US&anchor=%22Military+Order+of+the+Purple+Heart+of+the+U.S.A.+Inc.%2C%22&index=1&md5=8a052476a7aefa886c936df225674795) (MOPH) was formed in 1932 for the protection and mutual interest of all combat wounded veterans and active duty men and women who have received the decoration. Chartered by the Congress, The MOPH is unique among Veteran Service Organizations in that all its members were wounded in combat. For this sacrifice, they were awarded the Purple Heart Medal. With grants from the MOPH Service Foundation, the MOPH and its Ladies Auxiliary promote Patriotism, Fraternalism, and the Preservation of America’s military history. Most importantly, through veteran service, they provide comfort and assistance to all Veterans and their families, especially those requiring claims assistance with the VA, those who are homeless, and those requiring employment assistance. Programs of the MOPH include VA Volunteer Service, JROTC Leadership Award, Scholarships, Americanism, Purple Heart Trail and Cities, Welfare, and numerous community service programs, all with the objective of service to Veterans and their families.