

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 6, 2013

The Honorable Charles T. Hagel  
Secretary  
United States Department of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, District of Columbia 20301

Dear Secretary Hagel,

As members of the Senate Armed Services Committee and the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, we appreciate your continued work on behalf of our nation's service men and women. We write to express our concerns about the ongoing project between the Department of Defense (DoD) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to develop a single, common, integrated electronic health records (iEHR) system that will provide a seamless care transition for servicemembers as they move from active duty service to veteran status.

On May 22, 2013, your Department announced that it is seeking bids for a new software program for servicemembers' electronic health records. However, we are concerned that this development is a step in the wrong direction. Two separate health records systems at DoD and VA will not adequately address the serious challenges that our nation's veterans face today.

As older veterans continue to encounter barriers to the benefits that they deserve, and as so many new veterans enter the VA health system for the first time, a single iEHR would better optimize the care and services that these individuals receive than separate, interoperable systems. We urge you to act swiftly and work with Secretary Shinseki to keep the iEHR project on track to meet the Administration's goal of full operability by 2017.

We look forward to continuing to work with you on this critical issue, and would appreciate receiving a reply from you by June 30, 2013. Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,



Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator



Roger Wicker  
United States Senator