

## **New Secretary of Veterans Affairs**

President-Elect Donald Trump nominated Dr. David Shulkin to head the Department of Veterans Affairs. Shulkin currently leads the Veterans Health Administration, serving nearly 9 million veterans each year. Prior to being nominated by President Obama and unanimously confirmed by the Senate in June 2015, Shulkin served as president of Morristown Medical Center, Gorybe Children's Hospital, and Atlantic Rehabilitation Institute, and the Atlantic Health System Accountable Care Organization. A board-certified internist and a fellow of the American College of Physicians, Shulkin would be the first non-veteran to ever serve as VA secretary,

What do commanders of our Veterans organizations think of this nomination? Here are recent releases from the American Legion, VFW and Vietnam Veterans of America. National Commander Charles E. Schmidt of The American Legion issued the following statement concerning President-Elect Trump's selection of Dr. David J. Shulkin to lead the department of Veterans Affairs: "My staff and I have worked closely with Dr. Shulkin and believe he has improved the Veterans Health Administration in the short time he has been at the helm. I met with him just last month and believe he is deeply committed to improving VA care and all of the services that VA provides to veterans. If confirmed by the Senate, Dr. Shulkin will continue to find The American Legion to be a resourceful and knowledgeable friend with nearly a century of experience as an advocate for America's veterans. While The American Legion believes in a strong and robust VA, friends tell each other the unvarnished truth. When VA serves veterans well, we will say so. When it doesn't, we will demand fixes. The American Legion has a team of Washington-based staff, and expert volunteers from across the nation, who are eager to meet with Dr. Shulkin to discuss ways to modernize an antiquated appeals system, decrease wait times for health care and hold poor-performing VA staff accountable. We believe that Dr. Shulkin shares our goals."

"The VFW is proud to support the nomination of Dr. David Shulkin as the next Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and we are most appreciative of his willingness to continue serving veterans and making the VA better," Brian Duffy, National Commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, said in a statement.

John Rowan, VVA National President said. "Dr. Shulkin has done terrific work over the past two-and-a-half years as Under Secretary for Health; he has assembled a gifted staff to integrate community care into VA health care, enabling the VA to live up to the challenge of providing the best care available. Dr. Shulkin, a board-certified internist, is intimately familiar with the challenges facing the VA, including the urgent need to improve access to VA healthcare services.

Iraq War veteran and chair of the nonpartisan group VoteVets.org, released a statement championing Trump's acknowledgement that "President Obama appointed good people at the VA." However, Soltz added, "for Dr. Shulkin to gain our support, he must verify, under oath, that he will not implement any plan that would lead to full VA privatization."