

## Secretary Shinseki Testifies on State of the VA at House Hearing

Wednesday, February 04 2009

WASHINGTON, DC &ndash; Today, Congressman Mike Michaud, Chairman of the House Veterans&rsquo; Affairs Subcommittee on Health, joined his fellow committee colleagues in welcoming Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. The committee heard testimony from Secretary Shinseki and examined the current state of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. A link to a video clip of Secretary Shinseki responding to questions posed by Michaud can be found below.

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&ldquo;My impression after the hearing is that there is a lot of work to do, but that we have an able and dedicated person at the helm of the VA,&rdquo; said Michaud. &ldquo;I look forward to working with Secretary Shinseki to expand access to health care for all veterans. I especially appreciate his willingness to undertake the challenge of ensuring that our rural veterans have access to quality health care.&rdquo;

Michaud brought up a number of issues at the hearing. He pointed out that numerous veterans seek VA care when they lose health care benefits after being laid off from a job. Unfortunately, many newly-unemployed veterans&rsquo; initial application is denied based on their prior employment status. These veterans must then appeal the decision, and for the duration of the process are without care. Many veterans eventually get accepted, but Michaud hopes to work with the VA to find a way to fix unnecessary bureaucratic burdens and expedite veterans&rsquo; access to care.

Congressman Michaud also questioned the Secretary about access to care for rural veterans. He was pleased to hear the Secretary express willingness to visit rural areas in order to get a comprehensive look at veterans&rsquo; needs and to work with the Committee to address them. Finally, Michaud raised the issue of VA funding, emphasizing the need for timely budgets and adequate funding for VA operations.

Video of Secretary Shinseki responding to questions posed by Michaud can be found by clicking [HERE](#).

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