

Opening Statement of Mr. Thomas McCaffery
Nominee, Assistant Secretary of Defense (Health Affairs)
Senate Armed Services Committee
November 29, 2018

Chairman Inhofe, Ranking Member Reed, members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to discuss with you today the important work of the Military Health System. I am honored by the President's nomination to serve as Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs, and grateful for your consideration.

I'd like to recognize some very important people who have moved here from California during my time in Washington. My wife, Sydney Young, and my daughter, Logan, are here with me today. I could not fulfill my current duties as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, let alone the role for which you are considering me, without their love, support and sacrifice. I am incredibly fortunate to have them with me every day, and their presence reminds me of the far greater sacrifices that military families endure so that the men and women of the MHS can meet our obligation to advance readiness and support the warfighter.

If confirmed, it will be my privilege to lead the MHS during a period of unprecedented transformative change. With readiness of our service members as our first priority, we are implementing a historic transition in how we manage our Military Treatment Facilities. We continue to modernize the TRICARE health benefit for service members, retirees and their families. We are deploying a truly

modern electronic health record that will allow us to provide integrated, standardized care wherever we are needed, from the battlefield to our most advanced medical centers and into the civilian community. If confirmed, I promise to bring to bear all the experience I have gained in decades of work in the civilian and government health care sectors to ensure that each of these changes makes a difference where it matters most: on the battlefield and with our patients.

From MTF transformation to MHS GENESIS deployment to TRICARE, the support of Congress, and especially this Committee, has been essential to each of our key initiatives. In particular, the work you have done to advocate for, encourage and enable structural reforms of the MHS, such as the provisions of National Defense Authorization Acts for FY17 and FY19, have been critical. On behalf of the men and women and of the MHS, and our 9.4 million beneficiaries, thank you for that support.

As I consider the responsibilities I will carry out if confirmed, I always keep my father in mind. John McCaffery enlisted in the Navy in the Spring of 1944, nine hours after his high school graduation. Within months, he was aboard the destroyer USS Willard Keith in the Pacific. And for the rest of his life, he remained close to his fellow sailors and immensely proud of his service. Across the nation, millions of service members, past and present, and their families, carry that same pride. If confirmed, I will do my utmost to ensure that my actions as the senior medical

official of the Department of Defense are worthy of their pride, their service, and their sacrifice.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.