

PROTECTING VETERANS FROM COVID-19

As Ranking Member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, Senator Tester's top priority is ensuring America's veterans have access to the best care possible, as well as the benefits they have earned and deserve. He is also focused on ensuring the dedicated Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) personnel on the front lines of the COVID crisis have the supplies and support they need to serve veterans in a safe environment.



Senator Tester has delivered essential funding for VA, including:

- **\$14.4B** for medical services, personal protective equipment, and testing kits
- **\$2.1B** to support increased demand for Community Care, specifically emergency room visits and urgent care
- **\$606M** for medical facilities, including the procurement of mobile treatment centers, security improvements, and non-recurring maintenance projects.
- **\$12.1M** for VA's Inspector General to ensure accountability over the funds given to VA for COVID-19 so that veterans and taxpayers are protected

Senator Tester continues to advocate on behalf of our men and women in uniform and push DOD to provide more appropriate benefits and compensation for Guardsmen responding to COVID-19:

- Pushed Secretary Esper to bring more Guardsmen on Title 32 orders, from 58% at the beginning of April up to 84% today
- Introduced legislation to provide benefits for survivors of Guardsmen who pass away due to COVID-19
- Pushed Air Force Secretary Barrett to develop a comprehensive mental health plan that addresses mental health-related readiness under the current environment of isolation
- Introduced legislation to expand Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA) protections to those who received a stop movement order



Senator Tester continues to ensure VA staff on the front line can do their jobs safely:

- Wrote and passed a law that ensures VA providers are paid for every hour they work in support of this crisis
- Wrote and passed a law that provides additional funding for purchases of PPE; called on the Trump Administration and FEMA to ensure that VA workers have the supplies and protective equipment they need
- Successfully pressed VA to ensure that every health care worker providing direct care gets the necessary personal protective equipment, including those in state veterans homes and VA home health workers

Senator Tester is fighting to ensure no benefits are lost due to COVID-19:

- Wrote and passed a law that requires VA to allow veterans with pending appeals to teleconference into their hearing
- Successfully pressed VA to ensure that eligible veterans who do not file tax returns will still receive a stimulus check
- Wrote and passed a law that allows VA to enter into agreements with broadband companies to provide service in support of telemental health
- Pushed VA to be transparent in its plans for transitioning to virtual compensation and pension exams
- Wrote and passed a law that ensures certain veterans on the GI bill continue to receive housing payments as classes are disrupted due to COVID-19

