

Statement for the Record
Senator Joe Manchin III
January 24th, 2017

I want to thank Chairman Isakson and Ranking Member Tester for their leadership of this committee and all of my colleagues for their continued friendship. I am grateful that this committee has a history of working in a bipartisan way and know it will continue to do so. While this is not an exhaustive list, the following are three challenges that are a priority for me in the 115th Congress:

- 1. Veterans with Opioid Addiction-** The VA treated more than **66,000 veterans with opioid-use disorders in fiscal year 2016**. While *The Jason Simcakoski Memorial Act*, passed as a part of *Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act of 2016* (CARA) last Congress, made significant improvements, I still believe there are areas that we must work on. Veterans should have access to drug rehabilitation facilities and alternative treatments.
- 2. Rural Health-** West Virginia's terrain makes it difficult for some veterans to have access to quality care. I urge that this committee continues to support VA's telehealth program and rural clinics that provide care to our country's rural veteran population.
- 3. Non-VA Care-** In our current paradigm, a healthy partnership with non-VA care providers is critical in our efforts to care for America's veterans. I look forward to working with my colleagues, Veteran Service Organizations, and the Department of Veteran's Affairs on efforts to balance the requirements for non-VA care without taking away resources from our existing Veteran's Health Administration equities.