

Resolution No. 29

**FIX AND STAFF THE VA, DON'T PRIVATIZE IT**

Submitted by: Wisconsin State AFL-CIO Executive Board

**WHEREAS**, Congress passed the *Veterans' Access to Care Through Choice, Accountability and Transparency Act of 2014* which massively privatizes VA health care to potentially 3 million veterans; and;

**WHEREAS**, according to the *Congressional Budget Office* and the *Physicians for a National Health Program* (PNHP) research, the actual costs for privatized care will approximately be 30% higher than VA care; and

**WHEREAS**, PNHP states that patient satisfaction surveys at the VA are higher than for the private sector; and

**WHEREAS**, the original cause of the present controversy was the extended appointment wait times (90 or 120 days or more) for approximately 160,000 veterans who were new patients in the VA health care system, and the VA has now arranged health care in VA or private care facilities for these veterans; and;

**WHEREAS**, studies show the VA has inadequate staffing and a shortage of hospitals and clinics causing an inability to handle the large influx of veterans; and

**WHEREAS**, the VA reports that 84% of all appointments are 14 or fewer days into the future and national consultant studies of average patient wait times indicate that the VA has probably similar or shorter wait times than does the private sector; and

**WHEREAS**, the extended wait time for these 160,000 veterans is not how the entire VA system operates; and

**WHEREAS**, the privatization of the VA is likely to be at a greatly higher cost per veteran than at VA facilities, is likely to cause veterans to wait longer for appointments at private hospitals & clinics than at the VA, and is likely to provide veterans lower quality health care than that provided at the VA.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:** the Wisconsin State AFL-CIO will write letters to Wisconsin's U.S. Congressional representatives and to President Barack Obama: 1) Providing them with this resolution; 2) urging that privatization of the VA health care be stopped at the end of Federal Fiscal Year 2016 (9-30-16) and not be re-authorized by the Congress; and 3) Urging Congress to immediately pass a repair bill which would: a) require a study be conducted during the 2014-16 period regarding whether this massive privatization provides higher quality health care, lower cost care, more timely care and more effective care than does VA care and b) require the VA to provide a 10 year plan to reform and expand VA capabilities (human, scientific and infrastructure) so that it can provide the care veterans require as they age and as vets from current wars come to the VA; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:** the Wisconsin State AFL-CIO will urge all members to contact President Obama and our members of Congress urging them to fix and staff the VA and not to privatize it, which the Wisconsin State AFL-CIO will fight against for our own good and that of our fellow sisters and brothers who have served this Nation.

**Final Action: Passed**