



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**VETERANS GROUPS TO STAND UP FOR THE VA AT CHARLES GEORGE VA MEDICAL CENTER, THURSDAY, MAY 3, 2018**

**Veterans say: No privatization of veterans' health care - fully fund and staff the VA.**

*Asheville, NC—April 30, 2018* - Military veterans, many of whom receive medical services through the Veterans Health Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs, will stand in support of the VA outside the front entrances to Charles George VA Medical Center, 1100 Tunnel Road, Asheville, NC, Thursday, May 3, 2018, from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. and from 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is the second-largest agency in the federal government, with over 360,000 employees. The VA's budget request for FY 2019 approaches \$200 billion. The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) is the largest integrated health care system in the United States, providing care at 1,240 health care facilities, including 170 VA Medical Centers and 1,061 outpatient sites of care of varying complexity to over 9 million veterans enrolled in the VA health care program. The Charles George VA Medical Center, located in Asheville, NC, is named in honor of Cherokee, NC, native Charles George who served in the U.S. Army during the Korean War and was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for heroism.

"We are coming to Charles George VA Medical Center to show our support for a medical system that is second to none, one that provides the highest quality care and is responsive to the unique health care needs of veterans," said Gerry Werhan, former Marine and president of the Asheville Chapter of Veterans For Peace, co-organizer of the event. "The vast majority of veterans who use the VA Healthcare System know the quality of care and respect veterans receive when they walk through the doors of a VA medical facility," continued Werhan.

Robert Houde, Army veteran and president of Carolina Veterans Peace Coalition, a new veterans' group in Hendersonville, NC, and co-organizer of the event, stated that veterans throughout Western North Carolina are opposed to efforts underway in Congress to privatize the VA Healthcare System. "The so-called 'Veterans Empowerment Act,' co-sponsored by 11th District Congressman Mark Meadows, would lead to the elimination of the Veterans Health Administration through a further degradation of Finances/Care and therefore place health care for millions of veterans in jeopardy," said Houde. "We are not going to let that happen."

Contact:

Bruce Macdonald

bmacd47@gmail.com

617-797-1784