



single-payer

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DISCUSSION & REVIEW QUESTIONS:

- Towards the beginning of the video, Mr. Hegseth points out that, "...for the past few decades... the VA has been an abysmal failure: inefficient, bureaucratic and sometimes deadly." What specific factors do you think contribute to this being the case? How do you think incentives for VA employees might factor into the problems, if at all?
- After sharing a few horrific examples of the egregious problems with the VA, Mr. Hegseth explains that, "The politician's response to this debacle [is to] spend more money, a lot more money. The VA's budget has almost doubled since 2009. They've hired 100,000 new people in the past decade. Wait times have actually gone up, yet not one administrator was fired for the waitlist scandal." Why do you think that the government's response, as is typical, is to spend significantly more amounts of the taxpayer's money? Why do you think that no one was actually held accountable for the tragic deaths and other problems that the VA caused for veterans and their families?
- Mr. Hegseth then opines that, "The real solution to the problem is not more government, more money, and more bureaucracy, it's more competition, accountability, and transparency. Let the money follow the veteran. If veterans were given vouchers that they could use at any health care provider – private or government – they would control their own care. This, in turn, would force the VA to compete for their business, encouraging staff to treat patients as customers, not just as names on a waiting list." Do you agree with Mr. Hegseth's solutions? Why or why not? What solutions to solving the problems of poor quality health care for veterans would you propose? Explain.
- Later, Mr. Hegseth warns that, "...veterans will remain at the mercy of politicians and bureaucrats who continue to insist that the government can deliver quality and timely health care despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary. The reality is that it can't." What do you think are the inherent flaws with the government-run health care model? What do you think motivates some politicians to continue to publicly endorse government-run health care?
- At the end of the video, Mr. Hegseth asks, "...could government-run, Canadian-style health care work in the United States?" How would you answer his question? Explain. Considering that government-run health care systems don't work well, why do you think that so many people, in general, continue to advocate for it?

EXTEND THE LEARNING:

CASE STUDY: Veteran Deaths

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the article “5 Veterans Who Died While Waiting for a Doctor’s Appointment with the VA,” then answer the questions that follow.

- According to the VA report, how many veterans had died while waiting to be approved for health care? How long after Douglas Chase’s death did his wife receive approval for him to get an appointment? How long did Sgt. Sears have to wait to find out if his disability claims would be approved? What did Mr. Coates complain to doctors about, in terms of his symptoms? What happened to Thomas Baer? How did the VA treat Mr. Barazza?
- What more do you think the VA could have done in these cases, if anything? If you worked for the VA, do you think that you could look a dying veteran in the face and tell that person that you can’t help them? Why or why not? How has watching this video and reading this article influenced your position on this issue, if at all? Explain.
- Considering that government-run health care would result in literally millions of cases like this if implemented for all Americans, what arguments could you construct to crusade against such a system? Do you personally advocate for government-run healthcare? Why or why not?



QUIZ

SINGLE-PAYER HEALTH CARE: AMERICA ALREADY HAS IT

- 1. Over the past few decades, how has the VA performed?**
 - a. It has been an abysmal failure.
 - b. It has been exemplary.
 - c. Its success has been inconclusive.
 - d. It has limped along, but always served the veterans well.

- 2. When whistleblowers in Phoenix revealed that veterans had waited an average of 115 days for an initial appointment, what did the Phoenix VA do?**
 - a. It did not acknowledge the reports and ignored news outlets.
 - b. It apologized profusely and worked overtime to get all of the veterans seen.
 - c. It released falsified waiting lists to the public to cover its tracks.
 - d. It tried to shift the focus to the problems in Fort Collins.

- 3. What was the Obama Administration's Deputy Chief of Staff, Rob Nabors, answer to the VA debacle?**
 - a. Conduct extensive investigations at top levels.
 - b. Overhaul the entire VA health care system.
 - c. Spend more money.
 - d. He made no suggestions to fix the problem.

- 4. What's the answer to the VA problem?**
 - a. More competition.
 - b. Accountability.
 - c. Transparency.
 - d. All of the above.

- 5. One-third of all veterans – 14 million people – don't use the VA at all.**
 - a. True
 - b. False



QUIZ - ANSWER KEY

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<http://ijr.com/2016/02/546442-veterans-who-died-while-waiting-for-a-doctors-appointment-with-the-va/>

5 Veterans Who Died While Waiting for a Doctor's Appointment with the VA



By [Parker Lee](#)

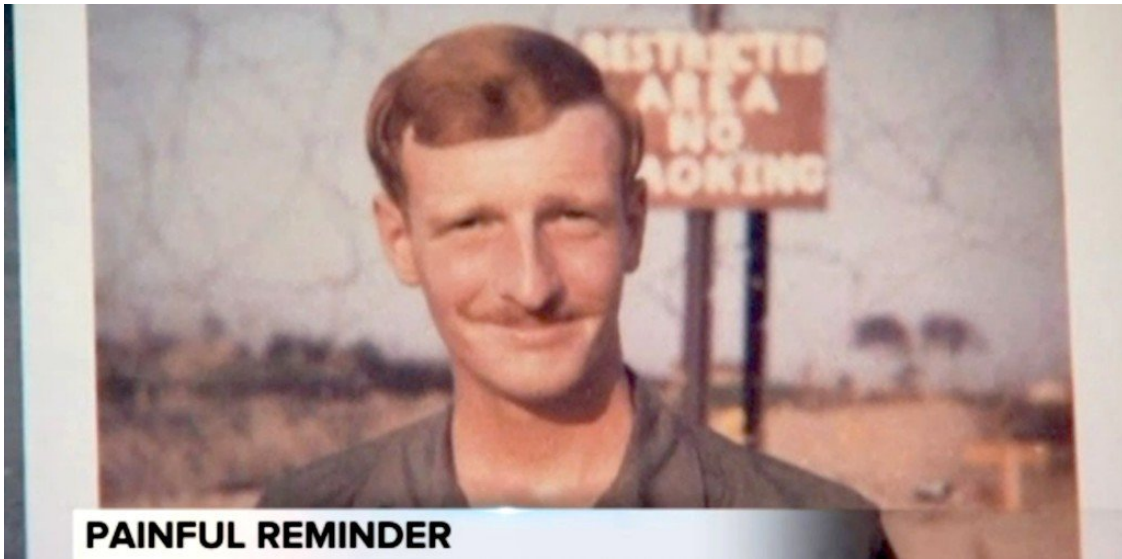


Getty - Pool

In September 2015, a bombshell report released by the Veteran Affairs Inspector General revealed that a mind-boggling 307,000 U.S. veterans had died while still waiting to be approved for care from VA hospitals and programs.

With a number that large, the idea that there are real people and families behind each of the 307,000 can often be forgotten. Here's a look at just 5 of these veterans who have lost their lives:

Douglas Chase



Screenshot/ABC News

In 2012, after a diagnosis of brain cancer, Vietnam veteran Douglas Chase requested an appointment with a local VA hospital near his home in Bedford, Massachusetts.

Two years later, his wife, Suzanne, finally received a letter from the VA approving his request, noting that the hospital would “greatly appreciate a prompt response” from the Chases.

For Suzanne, the letter seemed almost like a cruel joke — her husband had died in 2012, four months after sending the Bedford VA hospital his request.

Jeremy Sears



Screenshot/YouTube

After 5 tours in Iraq and Afghanistan, Marine Sgt. Jeremy Sears returned home with a traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder.

After doctors informed him of his condition, he waited from October 2012 to February 2014 for the VA to approve his disability claims — only to learn after 16 months that his claim had been denied.

Having never received a followup plan on how to manage his conditions, Sears would take his own life at a California gun range only a few months later.

Barry Coates



Screenshot/CNN

Considered “the human face of the Veterans Affairs scandal over delays in care,” Army veteran Barry Coates said that for more than a year, he had complained to VA doctors about experiencing “excruciating pain and rectal bleeding.”

By the time he finally got approval to get a colonoscopy, doctors discovered a tumor the size of a baseball and that his cancer had progressed to Stage 4. Denied the simple procedure that could have saved his life, Coates died in January at the age of 46.

Thomas Baer



ThomasBaerVeteransMemorial.com

In January of 2015, 74-year-old veteran Thomas Baer was taken by his family to the urgent care facility at Wisconsin's Tomah VA.

Once there, his family says he waited hours for care without being given the proper medication or a CT scan “because the center's scanner was down.” It was later determined that he had suffered from two strokes.

Though he was afterwards taken to another nearby hospital, Baer never regained consciousness and died two days later.

George Barraza



Screenshot/KPRC

In March of 2014, after he began vomiting blood, Vietnam veteran George Barraza was told by a personal doctor that he had a tumor or growth on his liver and needed to seek treatment right away at the VA.

When Barraza went there the following day, he was denied admission and instead was given prescription medicine and told to return on May 5 for an appointment.

Barraza would die on April 16, still weeks away from his scheduled appointment with the VA.

If each of these cases is difficult to come to terms with on its own, the fact they represent only a fraction of a fraction of the whole is even more so.