

# Sample Press Release

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March [xx], 2022

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[Local President Name, union title, personal email or phone number]

## **[State] Veterans Affairs Union Members Protest Recommendation To Close VA Facilities, Deny Veterans Choice in Care, Cut Jobs**

*Workers Condemn the VA's AIR Commission Recommendations, Which Could Shutter Dozens of Facilities Nationwide, Cause Mass Layoffs, Force Veterans to Rely on For-Profit, Private Care*

**[Local, State]** - Members of the American Federation of Government Employees' National Veterans Affairs Council (AFGE NVAC) [local number] joined VA workers nationwide in condemning the Veteran Affairs (VA) Department's recommendations that, if accepted, would shutter large segments of the VA health care system, cause mass layoffs, deny veterans their preferred choice in health care providers, and force our nation's heroes into a patchwork of for-profit, private care.

On March 14th, VA Secretary Denis McDonough [issued recommendations](#) destined for review by the Asset and Infrastructure Review (AIR) Commission, a board created by the 2018 VA MISSION Act to modernize, close, or reinvest to expand.

The Secretary's recommendations boil down to closing dozens of medical centers and clinics, and drastically cutting outpatient and inpatient services at countless additional locations. If the AIR Commission accepts the recommendations, veterans needing surgery, intense care, emergency care and inpatient mental health care in countless locations will be forced to rely on private, for-profit hospitals that do not specialize in veteran care.

**VA workers nationwide are calling on President Biden and Members of Congress to put veteran care first, and reject any AIR Commission recommendations that call for VA facility closures.**

[Insert local tie - will your city experience a facility closure? A change?]

[Insert quote from local President, for example: "These recommendations to dismantle and privatize the VA will send the Department into an irreversible downward spiral that will destroy its capacity to fulfill its first mission to provide care to our state's veterans. A privatized VA will not be able to continue its role as the main source of training for doctors, nurses, therapists and other medical professionals; our area is already facing a severe medical staffing shortage. We come to work, day in and day out, to care for our local vets because we care about their wellbeing. These recommendations will hurt our ability to provide for them, as well as our ability to provide for our own families."]

This report is the latest in a long series of attempts to privatize the VA. Over one third of all veterans' medical visits have already been sent outside of the VA system, and more than one-fourth of VA health care dollars have been diverted to the private, for-profit sector as a result of the MISSION Act. The AIR Commission also slashes the power of Senators and Representatives to fight against proposed closures and cuts to VA medical facilities in their own states and districts.

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**The American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) is the largest federal employee union, representing 700,000 workers in the federal government and the government of the District of Columbia.**

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