

Tester secured the following resources in the third bipartisan, coronavirus stimulus package to protect veterans and health care workers, which includes a total of \$19.7 billion for VA:

- **\$14.4 billion for essential medical and protective equipment** including the purchase of testing kits, personal protective equipment (PPE), and medical supplies to support growing demand for health care services at VA facilities and through telehealth services. And language to:
 - Require VA to provide PPE to all home health care workers serving veterans at home and in the community.
 - Waive pay caps for VA staff working overtime during the COVID-19 pandemic, so they can be fully compensated for hours served.
 - Enable VA to provide additional support for vulnerable veterans, including through programs to assist homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless veterans, as well as within VA-run nursing homes and community living centers.
 - Provide flexibility for veterans and their caregivers in the home-based Veteran Directed Care program, preventing the need for institutional care.
- **\$2.1 billion to support increased demand for care in the community**, especially at emergency rooms and urgent care facilities. Tester also included language to increase flexibility for vulnerable veterans with limb loss, allowing them to seek prosthetic assistance at community providers instead of VA.
- **\$2.25 billion to bolster telehealth capabilities** through increased telework and call center capabilities to deliver health care services directly related to coronavirus and mitigate the risk of virus transmission. Tester secured language to allow VA to enter into agreements or contracts with telecommunications companies to provide telemental health for veterans in rural areas for the duration of the public health emergency.
- **\$13 million to safeguard VA benefits** through the Veterans Benefits Administration. Tester secured language to ensure veterans and their families remain eligible for pension and other income-dependent benefits, even if an emergency benefit paid by the government would have put them over the threshold.
- **\$150 million to assist State Veterans Homes** in their response to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus. Tester secured language to continue providing payment to State Veterans Homes when residents are transferred to acute care due to COVID-19, regardless of their occupancy rate, and allow VA to provide any available PPE to state homes.

The bill additionally includes millions for medical emergency management, medical facilities, and the Office of Inspector General to support oversight of VA's efforts to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the coronavirus.