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NATIONAL SECURITY SUBCOMMITTEE

Chairman Tierney Comments on GAO Investigation on Army Health Care

Washington, D.C. – Today, Rep. John F. Tierney (D-MA), Chairman of the House National Security Oversight Subcommittee, issued a statement about a newly-released Government Accountability Office (GAO) report he requested as part of his sustained oversight on the quality of service and care provided by the military to injured service members. The GAO report is entitled, “ARMY HEALTH CARE: Progress Made in Staffing and Monitoring Units that Provide Outpatient Case Management, but Additional Steps Needed.”

The GAO’s investigation found that since the Subcommittee’s most recent oversight, the Army has developed and successfully implemented new policies aimed at reducing Warrior Transition Unit staffing shortfalls. The report finds, however, that staffing ratios at Walter Reed Army Medical Center were not revised, despite the fact that those patients have more complex health care needs. The report also notes that survey response rates are too low for the Army to ensure satisfaction by wounded service members.

“This latest GAO report shows encouraging progress in how we care for our wounded heroes. But it also highlights a number of areas we need to keep our eyes on, including the staffing levels at Walter Reed along with ensuring adequate feedback mechanisms to uncover problems going forward. I will continue to remain vigilant until I am satisfied that our wounded soldiers are getting the care and support they so rightfully deserve, and will continue to vigorously investigate the seriousness of any reported shortcomings” said Chairman John Tierney.

Chairman Tierney's Subcommittee has conducted extensive oversight on military healthcare, including having conducted four hearings, beginning with a field hearing at Walter Reed in response to the February 2007 series of Washington Post reports on severe mismanagement of outpatient care.

A link to the full GAO report will be forthcoming.