

Support the Veterans Administration

by Barry L. Reece

During the 2016 presidential campaign one bumper sticker grabbed my attention: “If you can’t afford to take care of our veterans, don’t go to war.” Bernie Sanders gets credit for these words of wisdom.

The US Department of Veterans Affairs is a full-service healthcare system that provides all types of care to selected groups of veterans. It delivers clinical care (medical, mental health and rehabilitation) to 230,000 people every day. As America’s largest healthcare system it has become a tempting target to corporate medicine and insurance industry personnel who see all those dollar signs and want to get their share.

The move to privatize the VA has the backing of some very wealthy and conservative crusaders. For example: Charles and David Koch have worked hard to dismantle some VA programs. The Koch brothers see the VA as a successful example of socialized medicine which could be a threat to the for-profit corporate healthcare industry. Also, three members of President Trump’s West Palm Beach golf club, Mar-a-Largo, have exerted considerable influence over the Department of Veterans Affairs. This shadowy threesome has been exerting their influence in ways that have a negative influence on VA policies and programs. They frequently meet with President Trump to suggest ways to move VA services to the private sector. So far they have had limited success because groups such as Veterans For Peace, Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Iraq Veterans Against the War and other peace forward groups strongly oppose privatizing the VA.

If you are looking for a current, well documented study of the US Department of Veterans Affairs, be sure to read “Wounds of War: How the VA

Delivers Health, Healing and Hope to the Nation's Veterans" by Suzanne Gordon.
This is a terrific reference book that should silence those who want to privatize the
VA.

Dr. Reece is a US Army veteran and active member of Veterans For Peace