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TIM RYAN
CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
13TH DISTRICT, OHIO

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
DEFENSE SUBCOMMITTEE
TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING, AND URBAN
DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

20 September, 2013

The Honorable Eric K. Shinseki
Secretary of Veterans Affairs
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, Northwest
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary Shinseki:

I appreciate your dedicated work on behalf of our veterans, especially those suffering from physical or psychological scars as a result of their service. I have met with veterans around the country who suffer from PTSD, and remain convinced that we can and should do more about it. One potential resource that I believe deserves additional attention is Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT).

In a letter dated July 1st, 2010, Congressmen Lungren, Chris H. Smith, and Mike Thompson, wrote to you about this new treatment for PTSD. Your response indicated that there was not sufficient evidence supporting its use at that time, but that VA was open to new and innovative PTSD treatments. It is my understanding that VA has not yet commissioned any studies of EFT.

A randomized controlled trial showed significant improvement in 86% of veterans with clinical PTSD after just six EFT acupuncture treatment sessions. A number of peer-reviewed studies, such as one randomized controlled trial by Britain's National Health Service (NHS), published in the *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, found that EFT effectively remediated PTSD. Another trial showed that compared to talk therapy, EFT significantly lowers cortisol levels. Other research found normalization of stress-related EEG frequencies in the brain following EFT. In fact, a review in an American Psychological Association (APA) journal identified 51 peer-reviewed papers analyzing the tapping of acupuncture points to address psychological issues.

While researchers from major institutions have applied for NIH grants on several occasions, their requests have been denied. I have been informed that a study has been designed at Walter Reed, but it has little institutional support, and has not been started. While there are currently hundreds of civilian therapists using EFT, there are only a handful of VA therapists trained in the method. I would like to respectfully request that, since EFT has met the burden of proof identified by the APA's Division 12 (Clinical Psychology) as an "empirically validated treatment" for PTSD, your office take steps to make it available to veterans.

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I urge you to take the following specific steps to explore the possible use of EFT with veterans:

- Encouraging VA clinicians to refer veterans to a free non-profit network of EFT therapists called the Veterans Stress Project;
- Making training and certification in Clinical EFT available to VA personnel;
- Designating EFT as an approved evidence-based therapy in the VA;
- Circulating copies of EFT clinical trials on VAnet.

A recent report found the lifetime cost of treating PTSD in a single veteran to be \$1.4 million dollars. Multiply that by the estimated 500,000 Iraq and Afghanistan veterans with PTSD and you get \$700 billion. That's the potential cost of not doing more to remediate PTSD in our veterans. I appreciate your willingness to consider new solutions to the problem of PTSD, and to alleviate the enormous burden of suffering on individuals and society that the condition imposes. I appreciate you taking leadership in this way, and helping to create a more positive future for our heroes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'T. Ryan', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Tim Ryan
Member of Congress