Chairman Takano, Ranking Member Roe, and members of the committee: On behalf of more than 11,000 urologic professionals in the United States, thank you for the opportunity to provide our views on this important piece of legislation.

For more than 100 years, the American Urological Association (AUA) has led a continuous effort to drive transformation and improvement in urological care. Our mission is to promote the highest standards of urological clinical care through education, research, and the formulation of health policy. The AUA also has a steadfast commitment to America’s veterans and supports state and federal efforts to ensure all patients receive the best care possible.

According to American Cancer Society (ACS) statistics, other than skin cancer, prostate cancer is the most common cancer in American men, with 1 in 9 being diagnosed with prostate cancer during their lifetime. The ACS estimates in 2019 there will be nearly 175,000 new cases of prostate cancer and approximately 32,000 deaths from the disease. In addition, prostate cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in American men, behind lung cancer, with about 1 in 41 men dying of the disease.

Prostate cancer is also the leading diagnosis of cancer in the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) with nearly 500,000 veterans receiving care for their diagnosis. The AUA believes the VHA is positioned to not only deliver the highest quality prostate cancer care in the country, but also to also lead the rapid generation of new research and optimal method of care delivery. Enabling veterans to have access to all state-of-the-art treatments is a near universal desire for all practitioners, but urology is the primary care provider for men with prostate disease.

Despite these disturbing national statistics, the VHA leads the nation in quality care according to multiple reports and has an advanced quality measurement program; however there are no quality measures yet aimed at prostate cancer care, nor are there national implementation
programs to ensure optimal prostate cancer care for our nation’s veterans. The establishment of a clinical pathway will standardize treatment options and improved results for patients.

Clinical pathways are treatment protocols based on collaborative scientific data and research that better inform more effective treatment regimens and healthcare outcomes for patients. H.R. 6092 directs the Department of Veterans Affairs to establish a clinical pathway for prostate cancer, designed in collaboration with disciplines across the public and private sector, to guide evidence-based care for veterans. The bill also ensures that the Department continues to engage in prostate cancer research and creates a real-time registry to track patient progress. This is particularly important for the African American veteran population.

In a recent study by the National Institutes of Health and the Department of Defense found that African American veterans had a decrease in the death rate from prostate cancer. In contrast, African American men in the general population are more than twice as likely as other men to die from prostate cancer. Past research and data has shown that access to care can help reduce the death rate. This legislation will go a long way toward improving health care outcomes for our veterans by standardizing treatment options and expanding access to patients to ensure cutting edge clinical trials and other precision medicine resources.

The VHA, as the only national healthcare system with consummate systems and data resources, is capable of creating a true optimal healthcare system to tackle its most common cancer diagnosis, prostate cancer.

The AUA hopes H.R. 6092 is given full consideration that moves forward from this committee.