

Good afternoon. My name is Emma Jean Powell. I am a registered nurse and President for the United American Nurses Georgia Nurses Association. We are the union for the professional nurses of the VAMC Atlanta. Thank you for the invitation to appear at today's CARES hearing.

I must commend the VISN 7 CARES group for keeping an open line of communication with their union partners. Information shared with the UAN/GNA has been shared with our nursing constituent on a regular basis. The VAMC Atlanta has been kept abreast of the latest developments in the CARES initiative, and our union feels that it has had a more than adequate venue to voice opinions, suggestions, and contribute to the overall dialogue. The Atlanta Medical Center stands ready to face the challenges of the changing face of Veterans Care.

The proposed CARES initiative challenges our Atlanta facility to provide extended services to our veterans through outpatient care as well as increase our inpatient services by thirty beds. As we expand our services I am concerned about our having adequate providers to deliver the services. There is a national healthcare crisis not just for nurses but other healthcare professions as well. I would like to know what plan will be put in place to attract the brightest and the best healthcare professionals to care for our veterans.

Again, I thank you for the opportunity to be here today and assure you the **Georgia Nurses Association** stands ready to face the challenge to care for our veterans.