



# NEWS

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## **Coalition Says Preparedness Fix Could Save the VA About \$193 million**

WASHINGTON— Congress was advised today that modern affordable technologies exist that can cleanly, safely, and economically sterilize infectious and contagious medical waste providing much needed operational sustainability for VA hospitals in an emergency and would provide ancillary and immediate benefits to the VA beyond emergency preparedness, including cost savings and carbon emission reductions.

We estimate that on-site waste treatment using sterilization equipment can provide a cost savings of \$190 million if installed at all 117 VA medical center hospitals that are currently relying upon off site vendors to haul and treat their waste, said Darrell Henry, Executive Director of the Healthcare Coalition for Emergency Preparedness.

“As our nation remains vulnerable in the area of contagious waste management during a crisis, we commend the House and the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations of the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs for holding this hearing on the VA’s emergency preparedness and we encourage the VA to implement appropriate programs that address on-site waste disposal for both emergencies and crisis situations and for every day operations where it can show cost savings and other benefits,” said Henry

“Current practices of disposal usually involve removal, transportation, and off-site disposal of waste. With real threats of pandemics, as well as natural and man-made disasters, transporting infectious and contagious medical waste is no longer prudent. There are modern, affordable technologies that can cleanly, safely, and economically sterilize infectious and contagious waste on the premises of healthcare facilities. Treating hazardous materials on site is also a cleaner, greener, less costly, and, most importantly, safer option,” said Henry

“Federal health officials and other experts have recognized that on-site sterilization is a best practice for emergency preparedness and healthcare facility operational sustainability,” said Henry.

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