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Congress of the United States
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March 1, 2016

The Honorable Charlie Dent
Chairman
Subcommittee on Military Construction,
Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies
HVC-227 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sanford Bishop, Jr.
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Military Construction,
Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies
HVC- 227 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Dent and Ranking Member Bishop,

As you begin to craft the Fiscal Year 2017 Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, I respectfully request that you include language limiting the VA from purchasing a dangerous medical device known as Essure.

Essure is a permanent sterilization device that was approved by the FDA in 2002. This nickel-based metal coil is designed to be inserted in the fallopian tube and cause tissue scarring. However, since it was first approved, this device has caused irreparable harm to tens of thousands of women and families.

For several months, FDA data showed that Essure had caused the death of at least four women and five fetal deaths in women who became pregnant after Essure was placed. However, some independent reports released last month indicated the number of fetal deaths caused by Essure could be over 300. On February 29, 2016, the FDA admitted the number was in fact much higher, confirming at least 294 fetal deaths. Additionally, tens of thousands of women have reported other symptoms such as extreme pelvic and abdominal pain, bleeding, migraines, allergic and hypersensitivity reactions to nickel, autoimmune reactions, loss of teeth and hair, the metal coil breaking and migrating throughout the body, and the coil cutting into the uterus and other organs in the abdominal cavity.

Over 25,000 women have joined together on Facebook to share their stories of how the Essure device has ruined their lives. They call themselves the Essure sisters. They came together as a group because no one believed them—for many, not even their own doctors. They were told this device was safe and there was no way the device caused their pain and other symptoms. But that proved to be wrong. We don't need another study. Their pain is real. Their stories are real. They have been ignored by their doctors, the device manufacturer, and the Food and Drug Administration for too long.

Despite these women's heartbreaking stories and all this data, the Food and Drug Administration is allowing this device to stay on the market. That's why Congress must act in order to ensure that no more women are harmed by this device.

We should not allow the Department of Veterans Affairs to purchase and implant this dangerous device in our veterans. We should not be utilizing taxpayer resources to purchase a device that has caused so much harm for so many families. Therefore, I urge you to include language that blocks the VA from purchasing the Essure device.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mike Fitzpatrick". The signature is stylized and written in a cursive-like font.

Mike Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress