



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on April 24, 2019

Sticking Up for VA Hospitals, AOC Says She Wants “VA for All”

Need more evidence that socialists don't learn from history? Consider this: Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.), an unabashed socialist, recently told constituents that the scandal-plagued Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) delivers “the highest-quality care to our veterans” and should be a model for a national healthcare system.



Speaking to veterans, nurses, and other constituents at Public School 83 in the Bronx last Wednesday, Ocasio-Cortez declared that other elected officials are wrong to say the VA needs reforming, especially when that reform involves the dreaded private sector.

“All I can think of is that classic refrain that my parents always taught me growing up, is that ‘if it ain't broke, don't fix it,’” [the congresswoman said](#). She took issue with the idea that “this thing that provides the highest-quality care to our veterans somehow needs to be fixed, privatized, tinkered with until we don't even recognize it anymore.”

“They're trying to fix the VA for pharmaceutical companies, they're trying to fix the VA for insurance corporations, and, ultimately, they're trying to fix the VA for a for-profit healthcare industry that does not put people or veterans first,” she said.

Ocasio-Cortez was referring to the [VA Mission Act](#) that Congress almost unanimously passed and President Donald Trump signed last June. That law expanded veterans' options for obtaining private care instead of being forced to rely on the plodding VA.

“If the VA can't meet the needs of the veteran in a timely manner, that veteran will have the right to go right outside to a private doctor,” Trump said at the signing ceremony.

Of course, anything that reeks of privatization is anathema to progressives, who believe that only government can be trusted to meet people's needs. An examination of recent history, however, puts the lie to the notion that the VA is a strictly altruistic agency concerned solely with the welfare of its patients.

Just five years ago, the VA was embroiled in a [major scandal](#) when whistleblowers revealed that VA hospitals across the country were maintaining secret waiting lists and otherwise gaming the system to make it look like they were meeting the VA's stated objective of having all patients examined within 14 days of their request. The Phoenix hospital juggled the books to cover up the fact that 1,400 to 1,600 veterans had to wait months to see a doctor, leading to as many as 40 deaths. An Atlanta television station [reported](#) that VA delays were responsible for “hundreds” of deaths nationwide since 2001.

In 2017, Dr. Michael Mann, a professor of surgery at the University of California San Francisco and



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former VA physician, [claimed](#) VA hospital administrators manipulated statistics, in part by denying care, to make themselves look good.

“All across the country, those VA administrators knew what to do,” Mann told the [Daily Caller](#). “No one had to tell them. You make it look good. You give central VA in Washington what they want. It doesn’t matter how it affects patients, because that’s not what the central VA cares about. They care about the numbers. They care about how it looks.”

The scandals don’t end there. VA hospitals have reused single-use insulin pens and performed colonoscopies with unsterilized equipment, leading to various [infections](#). They have [spent](#) millions of taxpayer dollars on artwork and other frivolous purchases; the Detroit VA hospital shelled out \$300,000 for televisions that were never used. They have [hired doctors](#) with histories of malpractice and criminal convictions, some of whom have committed malpractice or other unethical acts at the VA.

If private hospitals were engaged in even a tiny fraction of such practices, liberals would be all over them, demanding their owners and employees be punished to the fullest extent of the law — and then some. But when government hospitals are hip-deep in scandal that has actually cost lives and Washington dares implement some slight reforms to them, Ocasio-Cortez “offer[s] a full-throated defense” of them, as the [Nation](#) approvingly described her remarks.

If Ocasio-Cortez were simply trying to prop up the VA, her ignorance, whether genuine or willful, would be bad enough. Unfortunately, it gets worse — much worse.

“If you ask me,” she said, “I would like VA for all.” And her audience cheered.

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