

United States Senate

June 12, 2014

Mr. Sloan Gibson
Acting Secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Ave NW
Washington, D.C. 20420

Dear Mr. Gibson

Over the last few weeks the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Office of Inspector General has released disturbing revelations indicating nationwide systemic safety issues with patient wait times at VA facilities.

In addition to the already existing backlog, these deeply troubling wait times were coupled with allegations of VA employees creating "secret" waiting lists, shredding official documents and engaging in other nefarious activities in order to cover-up backlogs of veterans' claims.

The exposure of these actions prompted me to lead a group of Senate colleagues in asking the U.S. Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigation to launch an immediate, independent investigation of mismanagement, incompetence and corruption at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Last week, I engaged in a statewide listening tour to hear veterans' firsthand concerns about the VA and the services it is supposed to provide. After hearing many troubling stories from veterans throughout the state, I am concerned South Carolina's veterans may not be getting the best possible care. I'm sure you too share this concern and hope we can work together to address the challenges facing the VA in South Carolina and the rest of the nation. I know you agree with me that while we owe our veterans a debt that we cannot repay, the least we can do is ensure nothing but the best care for them and their families.

As part of this personal investigation of South Carolina's VA services, I am requesting your cooperation in providing my office answers to the following questions related to the existence of backlogs, official waiting lists, "secret" waiting lists or unauthorized scheduling lists that exist at VA facilities in South Carolina. All of the following questions pertain to Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center in Charleston, SC; the Wm. Jennings Bryan Dorn VA Medical Center in Columbia, SC and the Community Based Outpatient Facilities that they service.

I respectfully ask for your complete written response to the following questions no later than **Friday, June 20, 2014:**

1. Since January 2009, what are the monthly backlog totals for each VA facility in South Carolina?

2. Was there ever a "secret" waiting list or unauthorized scheduling list created and/or maintained at any VA facility?
3. How many VA employees had knowledge of or participated in the creation and/or maintenance of any "secret" waiting list or unauthorized scheduling lists? Please provide a list of those individual's names, titles and any bonuses or performance awards received since January 2009.
4. How many patients died while on an official or "secret" waiting list at each VA facility?
5. How many patients' deaths are alleged to be related to any delay in care at each VA facility?
6. Since January 2009, how many senior facility staff received bonuses or performance awards at each VA facility?
7. Since January 2009, what is the total dollar amount spent on bonuses and awards for senior facility staff at each VA facility?

Please contact Spencer Pederson, Legislative Assistant, in my office, with any questions regarding this request. Thank you for your prompt and personal attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Tim Scott
U.S. Senator

cc:

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