

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1604

June 5, 2014

Director Francisco Vazquez
Robert J. Dole Medical and Regional Office Center
5500 East Kellogg
Wichita, KS 67218-1698

Dear Director Vazquez:

I am deeply troubled by the news that the Robert J. Dole VA Medical Center in Wichita was using an unauthorized waiting list that endangered veterans awaiting care. The Department of Veterans Affairs is an agency entrusted by taxpayers with the mission of fulfilling our nation's obligation to those who, in many cases, have risked it all to protect our nation. It's especially disappointing that your office chose to reveal this information only this past Friday during the late afternoon. Our community expects more of its public servants, particularly those who work at a facility named after one of Kansas's most admired veterans of World War II, Sen. Bob Dole.

The Dole Medical Center cannot cut corners in providing health care to veterans. It is unclear how this failure happened and even more unclear whether there are yet more instances of neglect to uncover—as I understand it, this secret list came to light only in the last few weeks when national attention was already focused on the Phoenix OIG report, and it is unclear from your public statements when it first started.

I hope you will spare no effort in getting to the bottom of this matter and providing answers where questions have arisen, particularly as South Central Kansas's veterans, their families, and the taxpayers at large, have a right to know where things went wrong:

1. Who at the Dole Medical Center authorized the use of a separate, unauthorized list that placed these veterans at risk?
2. Have those parties been separated from the medical center or faced any other disciplinary action?
3. When did this unauthorized list come into existence?
4. What was the reasoning that justified the use of an unauthorized list?
5. Was any legal counsel consulted regarding this list? If so, who?
6. Have you or any other member of your medical center received bonuses that were based on the misleading information and performance results you were providing?

7. Your May 30th letter to the Kansas congressional delegation stated that VISN 15 leadership referred your discovery of the secret lists “to the VA OIG via the Hotline process.” My office spoke to the Inspector General who said that doing so this way is unusual. As medical center leadership, you are expected to call the Inspector General directly to ensure a fast response. Why did you not contact the OIG directly when you learned of this?
8. The Inspector General also informed my office that they could not verify your claim that you “used the Hotline process” to report this error. Have you had contact with the Inspector General to follow up on the call made by VISN 15 leadership?
9. When will you be issuing a formal and public apology to the veterans and their families who are waiting on medical care?

I would appreciate your prompt response by July 1st.

Sincerely,



Mike Pompeo

Member of Congress and Former Army Captain