

JEFF DENHAM
10TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

E-MAIL VIA WEBSITE:
Denham.house.gov

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

Washington, DC

May 19, 2014

HOUSE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

HOUSE TRANSPORTATION AND
INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON RAILROADS,
PIPELINES AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

HOUSE VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Medical Center
3801 Miranda Avenue
Palo Alto CA 94304

Dear Director Freeman,

As you are aware, investigations at Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Centers across the country have revealed the existence of unofficial or "secret" wait lists created by Veteran Health Administration officials in order to appear to be compliant with VHA directives requiring patients to be seen within 14 days.

The allegations at the Phoenix Park VAMC are particularly disturbing because they reveal widespread collusion among the medical center management and staff to carry out the scheme. According to public reports VA officials directed doctors not to schedule appointments in the computer system. Rather, doctors were told to screenshot the appointment information on the computer, print out the screenshot and then erase the record. The hospital placed the printout information on the "secret" electronic list and destroyed the hard copy. Patients were only removed off of this "secret" list when officials were sure that they could be seen within the required 14 days.

Similar stories are surfacing at medical centers across the country and the House Committee on Veterans Affairs is conducting a full investigation. As member of the committee I take our oversight responsibilities extremely seriously, our veterans must have trust in the healthcare they receive through the Department of Veterans Affairs. This trust has been severely shaken and can only be restored if the individuals involved are held accountable for their actions, criminal charges must come to those who deliberately violated VA directives and endangered the health and safety of patients.

While no accusations have been made in VISN 21 or in regard to the Palo Alto VAMC, I am requesting that you conduct a complete review of compliance with scheduling procedures at Palo Alto and associated healthcare facilities and to report your findings to my office.

I want assurances for the tens of thousands of veterans in my district who rely on your VAMC for their healthcare that there are no "secret" wait lists.

Please contact Christopher Del Beccaro in my office at (209)579-5458 or through email at chris.delbeccaro@mail.house.gov to confirm the receipt of this letter. In addition I will personally follow up with you to discuss the findings of your review.

Sincerely,



JEFF DENHAM
United States Representative
CONNECT

MODESTO
4701 SISK ROAD, SUITE 202
MODESTO, CA 95356
PHONE: (209) 579-5458
FAX: (209) 579-5028

YOUTUBE.COM/REPJEFFDENHAM
TWITTER.COM/REPJEFFDENHAM
FACEBOOK.COM/REPJEFFDENHAM

WASHINGTON, D.C.
1730 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
PHONE: (202) 225-4540
FAX: (202) 225-3402