



THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON

November 30, 2017

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Grassley:

Thank you for your November 21, 2017, co-signed letter to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) regarding patient wait lists at the VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System.

I was pleased to hear that Mr. Don Burman, Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System Director, and your staff had a productive call the morning of November 24, 2017. I understand that the dialogue with Mr. Burman, including the intermittent periods of time that clinical staff used wait lists other than the approved Electronic Waiting List tool to track psychotherapy consults, was helpful. We will continue to keep you and your staff informed on our ongoing actions to improve our performance in tracking wait times and hold employees accountable when appropriate.

As I mentioned in my previous letter, we are reviewing the background of all incidents to determine if any employees failed to follow Veterans Health Administration's Scheduling Directive 1230, and their intent behind establishing the wait lists. While no action can be taken against former employees, a review of current VA employee actions is underway. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken if warranted.

My staff and I will continue to work to improve our service to Veterans in this crucial aspect of timely health care access. Should you have further questions, Mr. Burman stands ready to respond, or your staff may contact Mr. Bailey Jackson, Congressional Relations Officer, at (202) 461-7128 or by email at James.Jackson25@va.gov. Thank you for your continued support of our mission. A similar letter has been sent to Senator Ernst.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David J. Shulkin, M.D." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David J. Shulkin, M.D.



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November 30, 2017

The Honorable Joni K. Ernst
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

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David J. Shulkin, M.D.