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United States Senate

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November 10, 2016

Mr. Michael J. Missal
Inspector General
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Office of Inspector General
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20420

Mr. Missal:

I write to you today formally requesting an update on the progress of the OIG report regarding the Brandon Ketchum case. As you know, I wrote to you in July of this year, requesting that this issue be addressed immediately.

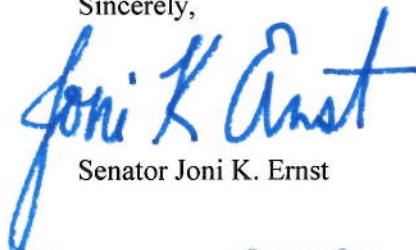
Since writing you with my initial request for a thorough investigation, I have also joined with other Senators who are demanding answers. I continue to be dismayed that Mr. Ketchum's request to be admitted for inpatient services was not taken seriously, and believe that his death was an unnecessary casualty of a VA system that still allows our veterans seeking help to slip through the cracks.

We simply cannot continue to operate with a business as usual attitude when 20 of our brave service men and women are committing suicide every single day. Since my letter on July 15th, 118 days have gone by.

Therefore, I again write to you requesting an update and prompt response regarding the investigation of the Iowa City VA Medical Center's apparent failure or refusal to properly treat Mr. Ketchum. While the VA has informally updated my staff that the case is progressing, we have received no official timeline or expectation of a report. Again, I want to reiterate that in addition to the results of your thorough investigation, I expect a written response from your office detailing concrete steps that will be taken to prevent tragedies such as Mr. Ketchum's from ever happening again. I speak for all Iowans when I say that our veterans deserve better.

If you have any questions concerning this request, please contact my staff via Katherina Dimenstein at (202) 224-3254 or Katherina_Dimenstein@Ernst.Senate.Gov.

Sincerely,



Senator Joni K. Ernst

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