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THIRD DISTRICT, MINNESOTA

COMMITTEE ON
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September 5, 2014

The Honorable Robert A. McDonald
Secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary McDonald:

I am writing to express my deep concern with recent press reports that employees at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center were pressured to hide significant delays in medical treatment and appointments for veterans.

According to the reports, the employees were in certain instances instructed to falsify medical records by indicating that veterans had declined follow-up appointments when in fact those veterans had never been contacted. If true, these reports indicate that employees at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center were intentionally putting the health of our veterans at risk. This is simply unacceptable.

I am particularly concerned about these allegations because as recently as June of this year, senior staff at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center assured me that no employees at the center had made any attempts to distort wait times. Again, if true, these reports directly contradict the assurances I received less than three months ago.

In addition to expressing my concern with the reports of wrongdoing, I would also ask that you promptly respond to the follow questions with respect to the Minneapolis VA Medical Center:

- 1) Are the reports of actions taken to alter wait times by falsifying medical records true? If you do not know at this time, what steps are you taking to determine the veracity of the reports?
- 2) If the reports are true, what corrective actions have you taken to date and what corrective actions do you plan on taking in the future to resolve this matter?
- 3) Have there been any additional instances of falsifying medical records to distort wait times at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center?

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Erik Paulsen".

Erik Paulsen
Member of Congress