

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 3, 2013

The Honorable Barack Obama
President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

The Honorable Eric K. Shinseki
Secretary
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Ave. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20420

Dear Mr. President and Secretary Shinseki:

We write you today to express our grave concerns about the Department of Veterans Affairs' lack of responsiveness to requests for documents and information related to the fatal Legionnaires' Disease outbreak at the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System facility in Oakland, Pennsylvania.

The House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations, made a request for documents and information on January 22, 2013. In particular, the Committee sought "all documents and emails regarding the Legionella bacteria or Legionnaires' Disease from the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System, VISN 4, and VACO from 2007 to present," which the VA was to deliver to the Committee by January 29, 2013. Following additional discussions, the Committee agreed to extend that deadline. The VA was then required to provide all documents relating to the outbreak by the initial January 29th deadline and all emails by February 12th.

To date, the VA has furnished only a small fraction of the requested information. The VA did provide a very limited number of documents for the Committee to review on March 21st – seven weeks after the agreed-upon deadline. But, the production represents only a small subset of the documents and information that the Committee requested, and the VA has yet to produce a single email relating to the outbreak.

The VA's response to-date is insufficient and unacceptable. The delays frustrate the ability of Congress to effectively conduct its essential oversight function and to ensure the care received by our veterans meets the highest standards.

Our veterans deserve the VA's complete candor, transparency, and accountability, and we therefore respectfully request your immediate attention to this matter. Any less is unacceptable and is disrespectful to the families of those who tragically died as a result of this outbreak and all veterans who rightfully expect to receive quality health care at the Pittsburgh VA.

Should you have any questions, please contact Brian Ryckman with Congressman Rothfus at (202) 225-2065 or Curt Cashour with the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs at (202) 225-3527.

Sincerely,



Keith Rothfus
Member of Congress



Jeff Miller
Chairman
House Committee on
Veterans' Affairs



Mike Coffman
Chairman
Subcommittee on Oversight
and Investigations

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