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May 22, 2014

Honorable Eric K. Shinseki
Secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Mr. Secretary,

I am writing to request immediate action in response to allegations of delayed care and mismanagement throughout the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care system that may have caused or contributed to veteran patient harm or death.

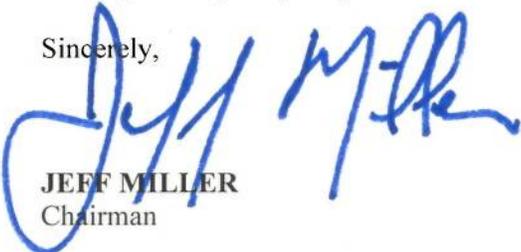
I request that you act without delay to issue an emergency directive requiring Veterans Integrated Service Network and Medical Center Directors to utilize every available tool – in particular, the authorization of non-VA Care – to ensure veteran patients receive care in accordance with current VA policy regarding patient access and waiting times.

In the course of conducting its nationwide access audit, I would assume that the Department now has the framework needed to quickly identify and contact those veteran patients currently waiting for care. Therefore, I also request that you act immediately to contact every veteran currently waiting beyond 30 days for an appointment at a VA medical facility to offer them the option of receiving VA care through a non-VA provider if the Department is unable to provide an appointment.

Mr. Secretary, the accusations currently facing the Department – which increase in volume and gravity by the hour - have understandably led to a crisis of confidence on the part of many of our veterans who no longer feel that VA is willing and able to provide them with the timely care they have earned and deserve. While I hope that you will act accordingly to address the immediate concern, I cannot be satisfied with a short term fix. To that end, I will be introducing legislation in the next week that will require that any veteran who is unable to obtain a VA appointment within 30 days of application, be offered the option to receive non-VA care. I also request that if the Department requires additional funds to offer expanded non-VA care, you notify Congress of that requirement immediately.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter on behalf of our nation's veterans and their families.

Sincerely,



JEFF MILLER
Chairman

JM/jt