

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

April 27, 2022

The Honorable Denis McDonough
Secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We write today to request information on troubling news reported publicly on Sunday, April 24, 2022, about a sentinel event at the Mann-Grandstaff Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center.¹ According to the article, a veteran was hospitalized with heart failure in March after not having medication renewed in the Cerner electronic health record (EHR) system VA is deploying.² Despite our regular verbal and written communications requesting timely updates on patient safety risks and issues involving the EHR deployment, the Committees were not officially notified by VA that a sentinel event occurred at Mann-Grandstaff. This news follows a troubling March report from the VA Office of Inspector General (VA OIG) on deficiencies in medication management at Mann-Grandstaff.³ The sheer number of unresolved issues with medication management reported by the VA OIG is staggering. These issues include medication alerts that were confusing, providers not receiving training on them, and the EHR discontinuing future medication orders written by providers, among others.⁴ It is also disconcerting to find out that VA did not concur with an OIG recommendation to identify new patient safety issues to the OIG because there was “no end date” to permit the closure of the recommendation.⁵ It is the Committees’ view that the end date for the reporting of issues concerning medication management is when this is fixed, and the safety of veterans is not jeopardized by this component of the Cerner system.

Technical problems in the Cerner pharmacy software and medication management issues are recurring themes in our oversight and hearings, and VA must provide the Committees with a plan to resolve them. As long as these issues remain unresolved the Committees cannot support Electronic Health Record Modernization (EHRM) go-lives in larger or more complex facilities.

¹ [*Veteran Hospitalized at Spokane VA after Missing Heart Medication, Highlighting Health Record System's Prescription Programs*](#), The Spokesman-Review (April 24, 2022).

² Id.

³ Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General: [Medication Management Deficiencies after the New Electronic Health Record Go-Live at the Mann-Grandstaff VA Medical Center in Spokane, Washington](#) (#21-00656-110) (March 17, 2022).

⁴ Id.

⁵ Id.

To that end, as part of the Committees' ongoing oversight of VA's implementation and administration of EHRM, we request the following:

1. The date when the sentinel event was first identified by Mann-Grandstaff staff and when that event was further reported to the EHRM Integration Office leadership;
2. The immediate actions that VA is taking to address the issues with pharmacy management that led to this event, the second instance of a veteran's prescription dropping off the active health record referenced in the article, and any other known issues that could produce patient harm;
3. A timeline and cost estimate for a permanent solution to these medication management issues and whether that requires a contract modification or new award; and
4. A briefing for Committee staff on the sentinel event(s) as well any current or future plans to resolve medication management issues.

We request this information be provided no later than May 6, 2022. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact our respective staffs.

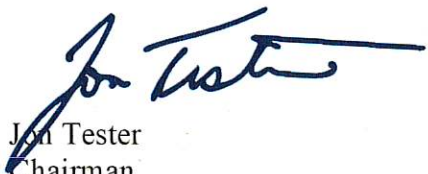
Sincerely,



Mark Takano
Chairman
House Committee on Veterans' Affairs



Mike Bost
Ranking Member
House Committee on Veterans' Affairs



Jon Tester
Chairman
Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs



Jerry Moran
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs



Frank J. Mrvan
Chairman
Subcommittee on Technology Modernization



Matthew Rosendale, Sr.
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Technology Modernization