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364 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

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July 25, 2024

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

Dear Secretary McDonough:

On Tuesday, July 16, 2024, your staff notified my staff of alarming allegations of an inappropriate relationship and sexual harassment between a supervisor and subordinate employee at the Mountain Home Veterans Affairs Medical Center (Mountain Home VA). Even more troubling, your staff's notification indicated these allegations were initially dismissed by the Mountain Home VA's Director and Associate Director. In fact, it appears it was not until the Mountain Home VA's local Union Vice President contacted the Office of Inspector General (OIG), which in turn notified VISN 9 Network Director Mr. Greg Goins, who proceeded to report the information to the Assistant and Deputy Undersecretaries for Health for Operations, the Office of General Counsel (OGC), and Office of Whistleblower Protection (OAWP), that VA took any action to investigate these allegations. Without these serious allegations being escalated above local leadership, I am afraid the issue would never have come to light.

Disturbingly, there appears to be a pattern at VA of leaders not taking sexual harassment seriously. During this Committee's investigation of VA's Office of Resolution Management, Diversity & Inclusion (ORMDI), the Committee found VA leaders ignored damning allegations of sexual harassment for months. Additionally, it was not until the Committee began investigating the Atlanta VA Medical Center's police leadership that the facility's Deputy Chief of Police, who stayed in a leadership position for two years after VA substantiated [REDACTED] harassed a subordinate [REDACTED] employee, was detailed out of [REDACTED] role. This is unacceptable. As you know, it is vital VA achieves and sustains a culture where harassment of any kind is not tolerated. VA employees are tasked by the American taxpayer to a crucial job serving veterans and I will continue to ensure they can do so in a safe environment.

Although I was glad to hear the Mountain Home VA's Director and Associate Director have been detailed out of their positions for their failure to adequately address the allegations, I still have many questions about how VA has handled this situation. As such, please provide no later than **Monday, August 19, 2024**, responses to the following questions, including copies of all responsive documents:

1. [REDACTED]
2. Please provide all correspondence from the local Union Vice President to VISN 9 Director Goins that made Director Goines aware of the alleged inappropriate relationship and sexual harassment allegations between a supervisor and subordinate employee.
3. Was Director Goins aware of the alleged sexual harassment and inappropriate relationship allegations prior to being notified by the local Union Vice President?
4. Please provide any correspondence from the local Union Vice President to any member of Mountain Home VA's Executive Leadership Team and the local Police concerning the alleged inappropriate relationship and sexual harassment allegations between a supervisor and subordinate employee.
5. Please provide a copy of the July 15, 2024, detail memorandum given to the Mountain Home VA Director and Associate Director. Please also provide the work responsibilities for the positions the Director and Associate Director have been detailed to.
6. Please provide any fact-finding, Administrative Investigation Board final memorandum, or any other investigation final memorandum related to inappropriate relationships and sexual harassment at the Mountain Home VA since January 2020.
7. Does the subordinate employee who allegedly experienced sexual harassment from their supervisor still report to that supervisor? If not, when did the subordinate employee get a new supervisor? If so, are there plans to give the subordinate employee a new supervisor?
8. When were Mountain Home VA ELT members and the local Police first notified of the alleged sexual harassment and inappropriate relationships?
9. What will the facility wide risk review entail? When will the review begin? How long will the review take to complete?

When producing documents, please do not alter them in any way, including but not limited to, application of redactions or a watermark. Additionally, digital copies should be provided in a format that enables their printing and copying by the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Thank you for your attention to this important issue. Please do not hesitate to have your staff contact my staff with any questions.

Sincerely,



MIKE BOST
Chairman

Cc: The Honorable Mark Takano, Ranking Member