

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1605

June 4, 2014

COMMITTEES:
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ETHICS

RULES

Director Francisco Vazquez
Department of Veterans Affairs
Robert J. Dole
Medical and Regional Office Center
5500 East Kellogg
Wichita, KS 67218

Dear Director Vazquez:

I am writing in regards to your letter dated May 30, 2014. I am very concerned with disparities between information presented to me during my meeting with your staff and the follow-up letter sent to my Wichita office just a few hours later.

On May 30, 2014, at 9 a.m. I met with representatives from the Robert J. Dole VA Medical Center. During the visit, members of your staff discussed their frustration with the antiquated Veterans Health Administration scheduling system and human resource policies that negatively impact the level of veteran care. Also, your staff mentioned that the medical center used a spreadsheet to keep track of some scheduling requests. At that time, I left the meeting with the understanding that the delivery of care provided by the Robert J. Dole VA Medical Center was not under further scrutiny.

Unfortunately, later in the afternoon on May 30, a fax written by you and signed by Associate Director Vickie Bondie was sent to my Wichita office. In the letter you state that an unauthorized scheduling list, more commonly known as a "secret waiting list," was discovered at the Robert J. Dole VA Medical Center and investigations for accountability were ongoing. During my meeting earlier in the day with your staff, this information was not disclosed to me. Nor was there any mention that the medical center terminated the use of the spreadsheet referenced in the meeting.

I would like to know why this information was not presented to me during my meeting with your staff. Additionally, I would like to know how many veterans on the unauthorized list were placed at risk? Is there any other information about veteran care, or the delay of such care, that has not been disclosed to me? More generally, is there any additional information about the Robert J. Dole VA Medical Center that you believe I should know given the circumstances of the situation that has developed nationally?

Due to my concerns with the way this information was withheld from me during my meeting with your staff and later sent to my office, I am forwarding a synopsis of the situation to the VA Inspector General.

I appreciate your commitment to ensure our Kansas veterans receive the quality care they deserve, but this lack of transparency gives me great concern. I hope that we can work together moving forward to address the challenges facing the Kansas VA medical centers so

that our veterans receive the care our country has committed to give them for their service and sacrifice.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Pat Roberts", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Pat Roberts