

# United States Senate

February 27, 2018

The Honorable David Shulkin  
Secretary  
United States Department of Veterans Affairs  
810 Vermont Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary Shulkin:

I am writing to share my concern with reports the Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) DC Regional Medical Center is continuing to struggle to provide safe and effective care for our veterans in the southern Maryland, northern Virginia and DC areas.

Scott MacFarlane of NBC ran a report earlier this month that described the DC Regional Medical Center as "low performing and high risk." The report cited recent spikes in infection rates from inline IVs. It also noted the April 2017 VA Office of Inspector General (OIG) findings of systemic inventory mismanagement, including over \$150 million in equipment that had not been inventoried in the previous year. That same OIG report outlined inadequate staffing and HR processes and that the medical center does not have direct authority over its recruitment and hiring functions. Mr. MacFarlane also indicated that repairs were necessary to address the surgical suite and other areas of the center. These reports followed the death of a veteran in his parked car in the regional center's parking lot last June.

There are nearly 380,000 veterans who call Maryland home, and many are utilizing the DC Regional Medical Center or the Community Based Outpatient Clinics.

As the VA seeks to implement the changes called for in the OIG inspection report, as well as the recent spike in IV infections, I respectfully seek your response to the following by March 15, 2018:

- A full reporting of how many patients the DC Regional Medical is responsible for, across the main facility and the community based outpatient clinics
- As a measure of resource utilization, how many patients have been seen in the last 3 years
- The number of delayed or back-logged appointments over the last 3 years
- How the VA has addressed staffing authorizations for logistical support for the DC Regional Medical Center, including the current staffing levels measured against the positions now available

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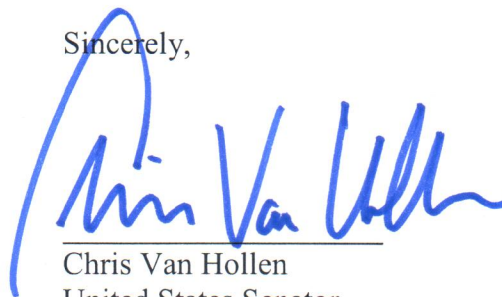
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- How the VA has addressed logistical challenges identified by the OIG report in April 2017, including the inventory stocks that were jeopardized due to the lease expiring on the warehouse holding those stocks
- The progress of repairs to the DC Regional Medical Center surgical suite and core areas
- How many other regional medical centers are required to submit monthly reports to VA staff
- The DC Regional center's dependency on VA staff for human resources functions

I remain concerned that these reported conditions constitute a potential barrier to quality health for our veterans. I look forward to working with you on our shared goal of ensuring our veterans receive the best health care and support possible. Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris Van Hollen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "C" and "H".

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Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator