

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

February 19, 2014

Mr. Gerald F Culliton
Director
West Haven Veterans Affairs Medical Center
950 Campbell Ave
West Haven, Connecticut 06516

Director Culliton:

We write to express our deep concern with the recently released Veterans Affairs Inspector General Report on “Environment of Care Deficiencies in the Operating Room VA Connecticut Healthcare System” at the West Haven Medical Center. We understand that since the report was issued in June, the Center has taken steps to implement the Inspector General’s recommendations. We want to work with you fully and swiftly implement all the report’s recommendations to ensure the brave men and women who sacrificed for our country get the proper care they deserve.

As you know, the Inspector General (IG) report substantiated all allegations made by facility staff about deficiencies in the environment of care in the operating room: cleaning procedures are not properly performed; the Environmental Management Services (EMS) has insufficient staff; EMS staff do not utilize standard operating procedures; patients with infectious diseases are scheduled throughout the day with those who do not have infectious diseases; and staff are not always made aware of an infectious patient’s precaution status prior to arrival. In addition, during the course of the review the IG identified issues related to maintenance of the Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) system and insect control.

In order to properly address these concerns, the IG recommended that the Center strengthen policies and procedures to meet industry standards and to address management of infectious patients, as well as Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning system issues. In addition, the IG recommended that the Center reassess EMS staffing needs and ensure that staff and supervisors are properly trained, as well as implement procedures to monitor the operating room environment.

Again, we understand that you have taken steps to implement most of these recommendations, including ensuring operating rooms are regularly cleaned, as well as hiring and training staff. With final implementation of policies to sustain these changes required by the IG by March 15, 2014, we respectfully request that you provide us with a status report on the IG recommendations met and plan for fully meeting all recommendations within the next month.

Thank you and we look forward to working with you on this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Rosa L. DeLauro
ROSA L. DeLAURO
Member of Congress

John B. Larson
JOHN B. LARSON
Member of Congress

Joe Courtney
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