Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 2, 2014

Ms. Barbara Forsha
Interim Director
Wilkes-Barre VA Medical Center
1111 East End Blvd
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18711

Dear Director Forsha:

In the past month, reports have surfaced about a secret appointment waiting list to mask the actual amount of time veterans were waiting to receive health care services at the Veterans Affair (VA) facility in Phoenix. In a preliminary report from the investigation into these allegations, the VA inspector general reported that an additional 1,700 veterans who were waiting for a primary care appointment were not on the appropriate electronic waiting list. Additionally, the inspector general found that the average wait times for an initial primary care appointment was 115 days.

Unfortunately, similar concerns have been raised at VA facilities throughout the United States. The VA inspector general's report confirms that there is evidence of systemic problems throughout the VA. It is unacceptable that individuals who have sacrificed for our nation are not receiving the care they deserve. As such, we are concerned about New Jersey veterans' ability to access appropriate and necessary medical care.

We are seeking clarification on a number of questions surrounding this issue: (1) How many veterans are currently on the wait list for appointments at the facilities under your direction? (2) How long is the average wait time for New Jersey veterans to receive an appointment at facilities under your direction? (3) What safe guards are in place to ensure that all veterans are placed on the appropriate electronic waitlist? (4) Have there been any reported incidents of wait time and data manipulation at facilities under your direction?

Given that this issue is of great importance to those New Jersey veterans and their families, we look forward to your timely response. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

Scott Garrett

SCOTT GARRETT
Member of Congress

Leonard Lance

LEONARD LANCE
Member of Congress

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