

## United States Senate

December 16, 2015

The Honorable Robert A. McDonald  
Secretary of Veterans Affairs  
810 Vermont Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary McDonald,

I write to request immediate answers to my concerns and the concerns of my constituents regarding the deeply troubling allegations of harassment and misconduct against personnel at the Robert J. Dole VA Medical Center in Wichita, Kansas, by KU's School of Medicine-Wichita surgical trainees. I learned of these egregious accusations from a Wichita, Kansas, media outlet, and our attempts to garner information from the Dole VA Medical Center and the Department of Veterans Affairs Central Office have been met with resistance and inconsistencies. The lack of transparency and cooperation from the VA is appalling and unacceptable, especially when the safety and well-being of medical students is at risk. Due to our previously denied attempts to obtain information relating to the accusations and incidents at the Dole VA Medical Center, I formally request answers and information to the following:

- 1.) Describe the allegations against personnel at the Dole VA Medical Center in Wichita presented by the KU School of Medicine-Wichita and their surgical trainees. How many surgical trainees are involved in these allegations?
- 2.) As a result of the allegations against personnel at the Dole VA Medical Center, have any Dole VA Medical Center personnel been placed on administrative leave? Who is responsible for determining whether a VA employee should be placed on administrative leave?
- 3.) If no personnel are on administrative leave, or there are no plans to place personnel on administrative leave as a result of these allegations, explain the rationale for this decision.
- 4.) At any time during their service, did any of the KU surgical trainees report negative experiences or issues related to harassment and misconduct by any Dole VA Medical Center personnel, in leadership positions or otherwise? If so, when did these reports occur and with whom at the Dole VA Medical Center?
- 5.) Prior to the KU School of Medicine's decision to remove all surgical trainees from service involving a certain surgeon, describe in detail any and all communication or actions taken by the surgical trainees, the KU School of Medicine and the Dole VA Medical Center regarding these allegations.
- 6.) Name the individuals at the Dole VA Medical Center, along with official titles, who were made aware of these allegations. When and how were the allegations delivered or shared with these individuals (formal letter, in-person communication)? Explain in detail the

timeline of events and who was involved from the Dole VA Medical Center, the KU School of Medicine and the surgical trainees.

- 7.) Prior to the KU School of Medicine's decision to remove all surgical trainees from service involving a certain surgeon, describe in detail any and all communication or actions taken by the Dole VA Medical Center. Such as, what communication or actions were taken within the VA chain of command, including the Veteran Integrated Service Network 15, the VA Central Office, and the VA Office of Inspector General regarding these allegations?
- 8.) If no actions were taken prior to KU's decision to remove these surgical trainees or upon actual removal on December 8, 2015, explain why no action was taken to safeguard the surgical trainees and address the allegations.
- 9.) Confirm whether an investigation is underway and what entity is overseeing and conducting an investigation. If an investigation is underway, when did it commence?
- 10.) Will the investigation include consultation or interviews with surgical trainees or any other Dole VA Medical Center personnel who interfaced with the certain surgeon in question?
- 11.) Furnish existing documentation that specifies the rule or directive that requires the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs to submit a request letter to the Department of Veterans Affairs in order to garner information regarding allegations of misconduct and wrongdoing at any VA facility.

Based on the information we have received, our concerns are three-fold. First and foremost, I am concerned that surgical trainees serving at the Dole VA Medical Center are at risk, jeopardizing their educational, professional and personal development due to inexcusable conduct. Second, I question whether the accusations of harassment and misconduct are being handled properly, perhaps even ignored, and whether the Dole VA Medical Center is failing to provide a safe educational environment by not holding wrongdoers responsible. Third, I am disturbed that the uncooperative arrogance of the VA is preventing accountability, creating more distrust and perpetuating a culture of incompetence within the VA.

On behalf of the individuals who bravely came forward to shed light on their experience, as well as the veterans in Kansas who have potentially been impacted, we trust that you will seek the truth and be forthcoming with the information requested. I request a timely response within 14 business days.

Sincerely,



Jerry Moran  
U.S. Senator