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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 27, 2021

The Honorable Denis R. McDonough
Secretary of Veterans Affairs
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I write seeking specific information about the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) policy making COVID-19 vaccines mandatory for Title 38 health care personnel. The expeditious nature of the development and roll out of the COVID-19 vaccine has saved lives and allowed the country to take critical steps towards normalcy. I have encouraged veterans and Kansans to get vaccinated to put this pandemic behind us. The VA's new mandate represents an unprecedented step, and, with it, there ought to be accountability for a decision that breaks from voluntary vaccinations to one of mandated vaccination as a condition of employment. Accordingly, in order to assess the efficacy of this policy and its effect on the VA's workforce, please provide answers to the following questions:

1. How will VA verify that employees have been fully vaccinated? Will VA require documentation? If so, what steps will VA take if an employee cannot provide documentation?
2. Will VA require employees to obtain a specific vaccine?
3. Will VA implement this policy prior to each vaccine receiving full approval from the Food and Drug Administration? If so, why?
4. How and where will VA record and store information about employee vaccination status?
5. How will VA ensure the medical privacy of those who choose not to be vaccinated?
6. What personnel action will VA take against employees who are in non-compliance? Will VA terminate employees for non-compliance? If so, what authority will VA use to terminate those employees?
7. Will VA allow for exemptions, including those employees with disabilities or religious concerns?
8. Does the policy apply to contract employees or community care providers who are authorized to provide care through VA Community Care Network contracts? If so, will VA need to modify those contracts?
9. Does the policy, including consequences for non-compliance conform to the terms of the collective bargaining agreements between VA and Title 38 employees?
10. When will this policy end? What metrics will determine that?

Given the importance of this policy, please respond no later than August 2, 2021. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Jerry Moran
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs