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April 28, 2016

The Honorable Robert McDonald  
Secretary  
Department of Veterans Affairs  
810 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Room 100  
Washington, D.C. 20420

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I am concerned about the unexpected leadership reassignments at the Cincinnati VA Medical Center (VAMC). In light of the recent allegations of mismanagement at this VAMC, these sudden developments are troubling. As a representative of Ohio's Second District and a member of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, I believe it is important for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to provide me with further information about this decision.

On April 26, the VA notified my office that Mr. John Gennaro, the current Director of the Cincinnati VAMC, is being transferred to the Erie, PA VAMC. VA also announced that Mr. Glenn Costie, the current Medical Center Director at the Dayton VAMC, will fill the role of Acting Director at the Cincinnati VAMC.

The VA's reasons for transferring Mr. Gennaro are unclear, and the timing is unexpected: Mr. Gennaro has been Director at the Cincinnati VAMC for less than one year. The reassignment prompts a series of questions. What were the factors leading to Mr. Gennaro's reassignment? Why did the VA select this particular time for the transition? Why did the VA choose to replace a Director with an Acting Director at the Cincinnati VAMC? When do you expect a permanent director for the Cincinnati VAMC to be named?

I have further questions about selection of Mr. Costie as the new acting director. I understand that, in the past, the VA has selected Mr. Costie to lead VAMCs after serious problems have been identified there. He was placed in charge of both [the Dayton VAMC and the Phoenix VAMC](#) in the aftermath of their scandals. In addition to the serious allegations brought forward by the whistleblowers at the Cincinnati VAMC, do you have reason to believe that there are other factors at the Cincinnati VAMC that require Mr. Costie's management?

Please also provide me with an update on the situation of Dr. Barbara Temeck, the former Acting Chief of Staff at the Cincinnati VAMC. After the Office of the Inspector General reported that Dr. Temeck had improperly prescribed medication for the wife of Mr. Jack Hetrick, the former director of VISN 10, VA [stated](#) on February 25, 2016, that it had "suspended Temeck's privileges and detailed her to non-patient-care duties while [VA's Undersecretary for Health, Dr. David J. Shulkin] considers appropriate additional actions." Who has Dr. Shulkin assigned to

determine what additional actions will be taken? When will the decision be made? What is the reason for the delay?

A VA investigation has already confirmed that Dr. Temeck committed serious misconduct, but she remains on the VA payroll and is supported by taxpayer dollars. Clearly, additional accountability is desperately needed. The VA must be able to respond decisively to reports of employee misconduct. As you know, last year the House passed [H.R. 1994](#), which would allow the VA to remove or demote employees for misconduct. I would appreciate your support for Senate passage of this important bill.

Finally, I remain concerned about the whistleblowers who first reported the allegations of mismanagement and poor care at the Cincinnati VAMC. As concerns about VA leadership continue to come to light, it is clear that we cannot assume that VA whistleblowers will be safe from retaliation. As I requested in [the letter I sent to you in February](#), please do everything possible to protect these whistleblowers and to ensure that any reported misconduct is appropriately addressed. Whistleblower protection is another reason I ask for your support for [H.R. 1994](#); it establishes a process for handling whistleblower complaints at the VA.

I thank you for your work on behalf of our veterans. I know that we agree about the importance of ensuring that VA leadership is held to a high standard and kept accountable. I look forward to your prompt response on this matter.

I appreciate your assistance. If you have any additional questions, you may contact my legislative assistant, Rebecca Duberstein at [rebecca.duberstein@mail.house.gov](mailto:rebecca.duberstein@mail.house.gov).

Sincerely,



Brad Wenstrup  
Member of Congress