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MONETARY POLICY AND TRADE

BILL FOSTER

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
11TH DISTRICT, ILLINOIS

May 8, 2014

Ms. Joan M. Ricard, Director
Edward Hines, Jr. VA Hospital
5000 South 5th Ave.
Hines, IL 60141

Dear Director Ricard:

I am writing to you today with regard to the accusations against staff at the Phoenix VA Hospital in Arizona. As I am sure you are already aware, staff at the hospital have been accused of recording appointment request information outside of the computer system in order to evade accountability for long wait times for appointments and other customer service metrics. If proven true, this would be an outrageous betrayal of the public's trust and a dereliction of the government's basic obligation to take care of our soldiers after their service. This tragic deceit could potentially have caused the premature death of more than 40 veterans. Our veterans deserve much better.

I am pleased that the executives at the hospital have been placed on administrative leave until the facts of the case can be verified. However, we must also determine if these deceitful procedures are occurring at other VA facilities throughout the country.

As Director of the Edward Hines, Jr. VA Hospital, I ask for your assurances that all data regarding appointment requests and wait times are being consistently and accurately entered into the computer systems at the hospital and its satellite clinics. I also respectfully request information on what proactive measures you have taken to verify that appointment and wait time data are being reported consistently and accurately.

Thank you for your commitment to public service. I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bill Foster".

BILL FOSTER
Member of Congress