

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4305

May 29, 2014

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I write with deep concern about the growing array of allegations of misconduct involving Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) officials at 26 separate VA medical facilities, and I seek your leadership in addressing this troubling situation. Whistleblowers within the VA continue to come forward to share heartbreaking claims of mistreatment and neglect at VA facilities across the country, including a number in my home state of Texas.

The gravity and scope of these allegations demand the expertise and resources of world-class professional criminal investigators. Therefore, I ask you to direct the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to get involved and take the lead in this investigation. The VA's Acting Inspector General (IG) and his team are to be commended for aggressively launching their investigation, but the breadth and complexity of these problems very likely exceeds the capabilities of any IG office. The FBI and its expansive resources should be brought to bear here, especially to seize and preserve criminal evidence before it is destroyed. And, while I appreciate the work of your Deputy Chief of Staff in helping the IG get its investigation going, it is simply inadequate to assign a White House political operative to oversee an investigation of this nature and significance.

VA employees are alleged to have engaged in various fraudulent practices to artificially meet performance objectives and cover up the fact that countless veterans were waiting many months to receive desperately needed medical care. The unacceptable lags in diagnosis and treatments such as surgery or chemotherapy have potentially threatened the lives of these veterans. These unethical and likely criminal practices included the falsification of appointment records, manipulation of official waiting lists, use of secret waiting lists, fabrication of related data, and destruction of evidence. Perhaps the most disturbing aspect of this alleged misconduct is the purported motive behind it – personal financial gain. It appears that while VA employees “cooked the books” and thereby collected financial bonuses, American veterans needlessly suffered and died as a result.

We must get to the bottom of these allegations as quickly as possible, and anyone guilty of criminal wrongdoing must be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. Based on the scope and magnitude of these problems, we can conclude they are not isolated cases of administrative error by low-level clerks. Instead, they appear to be part of a pattern of systemic, pervasive fraud involving multiple layers of personnel within these facilities. I was especially troubled by a new

President Barack Obama

May 29, 2014

Page 2

allegation reported yesterday from a whistleblower at a VA medical facility in Central Texas, who has come forward with documentary evidence and characterizes the bad actors within the facility as an “organized crime syndicate.”

If the nationwide allegations of fraud, deception, and related misconduct are true, they could constitute criminal offenses under various sections of federal law, including 18 USC §§ 1001, 1002, 1035, and 1505, each of which carry a potential sentence of up to five years in prison. If fraud has become standard operating procedure within VA medical facilities, it would represent not only a violation of federal law, but a terrible betrayal of America’s veterans.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Cornyn". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "J".

JOHN CORNYN
United States Senator