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The Honorable Robert McDonald
Secretary of Veterans Affairs
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20420

Dear Secretary McDonald,

I appreciate your commitment to veterans across this country and for continuing to work to correct any and all failings within the VA system to ensure every veteran in America receives the excellent care they deserve. Despite the implementation of the Veteran's Choice Card to prevent long wait times and contracting with a third party administrator, veterans in Arizona continue to describe instances of inadequate care.

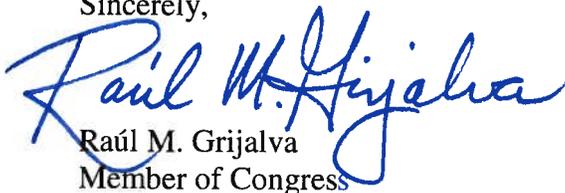
A recent news article raised concerns of serious problems at the Southern Arizona VA Health Care System (SAVAHCS) in Tucson. The article describes rescheduled appointments leading to longer wait times, high provider turn-over, understaffing that jeopardizes quality of care, and retaliation towards employees who question practices. I ask that you work with SAVAHCS immediately to determine the severity of these reported problems and to see if they are consistent with any patterns of maltreatment.

As you know, a 2014 Combined Assessment Program Review of SAVAHCS evaluated several areas of the hospital, including quality management. While this report was largely positive, I would like you to consider whether the scope was too limited and whether additional assessments are needed to ensure veterans in and around Tucson are receiving high quality and timely care. Additionally, please provide me with information regarding new or ongoing efforts to bring and retain qualified providers to the Tucson VA.

I am proud that SAVAHCS has strong community support and that they have scored in the top quintile among regional VA facilities for many Strategic Analytics for Improvements and Learning (SAIL) measures, including patient satisfaction and primary care wait times. However, allegations of wrongdoing must be taken seriously given the vulnerability and needs of our veterans who have already sacrificed so much.

I look forward to receiving a prompt response with your determination on the need for a further assessment and stand ready to work with you to address any shortcomings.

Sincerely,


Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress