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CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON  
ARMED SERVICES  
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY  
AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS  
COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

## United States Senate

April 8, 2016

The Honorable Linda Halliday  
Deputy Inspector General  
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
810 Vermont Avenue  
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Inspector General Halliday,

I write to you regarding recent allegations by whistleblowers that staff at Arizona VA hospitals and clinics have been canceling pending appointments for veterans who died by recording these cancellations as “requested” by the deceased veteran. If true, these scheduling actions are in violation of VA’s own policies and guidelines regarding proper steps to be taken by VA staff after a veteran’s death. Given the similarity of these allegations to the wait-time manipulation scandal at the Phoenix VA brought to light nearly two years ago, there is concern that this may have occurred in order for VA staff to conceal possible connections between the pending appointment and the veteran’s death, or to artificially improve wait-time or scheduling statistics by which a VA medical professional, clinic, or hospital are measured.

I request that you immediately investigate whether any of the current allegations for inappropriate appointment cancellations are factual and if so, whether VA staff took these actions in order to conceal a veteran’s cause of death that may be related to their inability to get timely care at the VA or to obtain financial bonuses or higher performance ratings. Further, I request that you investigate these allegations throughout the Veterans Health Administration to determine if other hospitals and clinics are also violating VA policy regarding canceling appointments for deceased veterans.

As the VA Office of Inspector General has taken past actions with respect to referring dozens of wait-time and scheduling-related issues to the Department of Justice (DOJ), I request you keep me informed of any referrals to the DOJ as a result of your investigation of allegations regarding the cancellation of deceased veterans’ appointments at the VA. I look forward to your timely response to this letter.

Sincerely,



John McCain  
United States Senator

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