United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 5, 2014

The Honorable Eric J. Holder, Jr.
United States Attorney General
Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Dear Attorney General Holder,

The interim report released on May 28, 2014, by the Department of Veterans Affairs Inspector General Richard Griffin confirms the potential scope and severity of serious misconduct in Department of Veterans Affairs medical facilities. The sheer number of facilities apparently involved – more than 42 are now under review – calls for immediate and significant involvement by the Department of Justice. Evidence of secret waiting times, falsification of records, destruction of documents, and other potential criminal wrongdoing has appalled and angered the nation, and imperiled trust and confidence in the Veterans Health Administration.

Although the VA Inspector General commendably has consulted with the Department of Justice, we urge that federal investigators and attorneys assume a leadership role to assure that anyone responsible for abuses is held accountable through criminal prosecution.

While we commend and appreciate the IG's pursuit of his inquiry, an effective and prompt criminal investigation must inevitably involve the resources of the Department of Justice, including the FBI. The spreading and growing scale of apparent criminal wrongdoing is fast outpacing the criminal investigative resources of the IG, and the revelations in the interim report only highlight the urgency of involvement by the Department of Justice. There is a need for prompt results from the IG – not by August, as the IG has publicly said, but within the next few weeks. This challenge requires resources that only the Department of Justice can provide in developing and assessing evidence, pursuing leads, and initiating active prosecutions aggressively if warranted.

Lack of prompt, effective, and independent investigation may further undermine trust and confidence by veterans, and dissuade them from seeking necessary care. Indeed, leaving significant issues unresolved for too long – regardless of the outcome of the investigation – would itself be harmful to public trust in this important institution.

In honor of the service and sacrifice of our courageous patriots, we should recognize and reaffirm our commitment to the best possible healthcare this nation can provide to all veterans. We must

also hold accountable anyone who has denied this care and thereby put our veterans' lives in danger. Your leadership in investigating and prosecuting any wrongdoing will help restore faith in the VA medical care system – in the face of systemic failures – and help correct shortcomings that have outraged and astonished Americans. We look forward to continued cooperation between the DOJ and the VA in pursuing this common goal: keeping faith with our veterans.

Sincerely,

RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
United States Senate

JOHN McCAIN
United States Senate

MARY L. LANDRIEU
United States Senate

JAMES M. INHOFE
United States Senate

TOM UDALL
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