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# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 16, 2016

Website with

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The Honorable Robert A. McDonald  
Secretary of The Department of Veterans Affairs  
810 Vermont Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary McDonald:

One would think after all of the self-inflicted controversy the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has endured, you would at least try to get your act together.

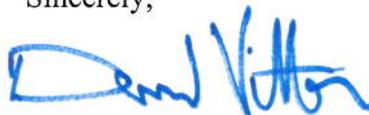
Recent reports have indicated that VA decided to stop sharing data on the quality of care at its facilities on July 1 and will not resume this practice until October 1. Are you serious? Providing veterans with quality care is the very core of what the VA's mission should be, which is why your decision to hide the comparison data is imbecilic and unlawful. I don't need to remind you that the Choice Act was signed into law in 2014 as way to redress this very issue—requiring the VA to be more transparent with the data relating to quality of public and private hospitals.

I fully expected a turnaround in the way your agency provides service, but making a conscious decision to withhold necessary information from veterans is baffling.

This most recent decision denies veterans the ability to find a medical facility that best suits their needs and budget. As the country's largest health care system and a federally funded entity, it is the duty and obligation of the VA to provide easy access to information for our veterans. It saddens me to see that the VA has continued to take its responsibilities so lightly after receiving harsh criticism for their lackluster performances in their facilities nationwide. What on earth does your agency gain by withholding quality care data? It certainly makes the VA appear as though you're covering up data because it shows poor quality. Veterans deserve a system that is not riddled with systemic inefficiency, disrespectful practices, and allows access to simple necessary information.

I urge you to end this practice immediately and to act with American service members in mind. If our veterans have the ability to sacrifice their lives and families to serve this great nation, then the least you can do is make an honest attempt to not engage in these baseless methods that have a direct impact on their families.

Sincerely,



David Vitter  
United States Senator

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