



RICK SCOTT
GOVERNOR

July 7, 2014

Mr. Bob McDonald
United States Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue Northwest
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Mr. McDonald:

You will soon enter the position of U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs with many challenges and high expectations. No doubt, you can agree that current conditions at Florida VA hospitals are unacceptable. Our veterans who have served with honor and distinction are not receiving the proper care, and when Florida health inspectors work to help Florida veterans, federal officials turn them away. You must end the VA's culture of secrecy and address the chronic and systematic problems that plague the federal VA healthcare system. Our expectation is that you allow Florida inspectors into your facilities and usher in a new era of transparency at the Veterans Administration.

As the most military-friendly and veteran-friendly state in the country, we honor the men and women who wear the uniform and call Florida home, and we are disappointed at the way the VA hospitals in Florida have treated our brave veterans. The fake waiting lists, the lack of adequate care, the delays in treatment, and the mismanagement of personnel, paperwork and patient care are all unacceptable.

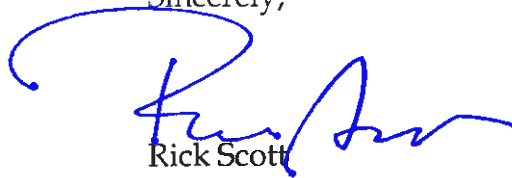
As the chief health policy and planning entity for the state that licenses, inspects, and investigates consumer complaints, AHCA should have access to federal VA hospitals to inspect their processes and their facilities and I am asking you to grant this request. On eight separate occasions at six federal VA hospitals, however, state inspectors have been blocked by federal officials from carrying out their mission of ensuring facilities in Florida meet the healthcare needs of our veterans. I have instructed AHCA to sue the federal veterans affairs agency to shine a light on their activities and to help protect the lives of our heroes who have earned nothing short of access to the best care possible.

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Additionally, as we attempt to understand the scope of the troubles facing the VA, the agency must respond to Freedom of Information Act requests for public records.

Our veterans served our nation with honor and distinction. For too long, the VA has failed to provide necessary and timely care to those who have fought and defended America's freedoms. Fixing the broken federal VA hospital system on their behalf is a national priority, and transparency is critical to that mission. These issues cannot be fixed unless the American people know what the problems are, and transparency at every level must be a priority for your leadership.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rick Scott", with a large, sweeping flourish above the name.

Rick Scott
Governor