

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 22, 2016

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

Dear Secretary McDonald:

We write to you regarding your current search for a permanent director of the Phoenix VA Health Care System (PVAHCS). As you know, there have been five directors of the PVAHSCS since the 2014 wait-time scandal and the last search for a permanent director took over a year. This would be far too long to wait for another director at this vital health care facility.

The veterans who depend on the PVAHCS for their health care deserve a high-quality, full-time and permanent director to provide long-term leadership and reform. We urge you to prioritize the hiring and placement of a new permanent director in Phoenix and consider the following qualifications as necessary for consideration for this key job:

- 1) Patient-centered medical experience within both public and not-for-profit medical systems;
- 2) Service as a military veteran or as an officer in the Public Health Service;
- 3) Commitment to veteran-centric care and fully utilizing all programs within the VA, including the Veteran Choice Program, to provide quality care as quickly as possible for veterans;
- 4) Ability to develop creative solutions addressing the health care needs of veterans served by the PVAHCS, for example, helping to implement a Clay Hunt Act suicide-prevention pilot program; and
- 5) Willingness to work productively with members of the Arizona congressional delegation to ensure that veterans in the area served by the PVAHCS receive quality and timely care.

Hiring a permanent director at PVAHCS should be the highest priority for the department. It is critical that any future director put veterans first as well as understand and have experience caring for the unique health care needs of the veteran community.

We also request you to keep us regularly informed on the current status of this search for a permanent director of the PVAHCS. Thank you and we look forward to your response to this message.

Sincerely,



John McCain
United States Senator



Jeff Flake
United States Senator