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Ginny Creasman
Executive Director
Charles S. Kettles VA Medical Center
2215 Fuller Rd
Ann Arbor, MI 48105

Chris Cauley
Executive Director
John D. Dingell VA Medical Center
4646 John R St.
Detroit, MI 48201

Dear Director Creasman and Director Cauley:

This letter is a follow-up to the letter that was sent on February 14th regarding the Department of Veteran Affairs' (VA) dismissal of more than 1,000 employees. Last night, the VA announced it would be terminating an additional 1,400 probational employees across VA facilities. I remain deeply concerned about the impact these terminations will have on patient care.

I have received multiple calls from employees at both the John D. Dingell VA Medical Center in Detroit and the Charles S. Kettles VA Medical Center in Ann Arbor in the last day. They are all very concerned about the volume of cuts that have been made and what it is going to mean for the operations of the medical centers, as well as the quality of services that veterans access. It is my understanding that the cuts in the last 24 hours are far larger than the ones ten days ago.

While the VA asserts that this latest dismissal applies to employees in "non-mission critical positions," I fear this will still have a significant impact on veterans. Veterans deserve the highest quality of care our nation can provide. But let's be clear—this goes far beyond direct healthcare services. Veterans also deserve access to well-maintained facilities and quality meals, those receiving inpatient care should be able to have their room upkept, and everyone visiting a VA medical center deserves to feel comfortable in a warm or cool building with proper maintenance. All of these services will be compromised by a reduction in staff.

It's important we remember nearly 30% of employees at VA medical centers are veterans themselves, and they have been in a state of constant turmoil the past several weeks. They have had to witness their colleagues who work hard be fired just because they have not been on the job longer than a year, they've had to adjust to staff reductions, and they've had to justify their jobs that they may or may not ultimately lose. This is not right, and it has created a stressful and difficult environment for staff and patients alike.

Furthermore, the realities of our health care system are driving many health care workers to burnout. I am alarmed by the additional strain this will cause for existing employees who will have to shoulder additional responsibilities.

To ensure we fully understand the impacts of this decision across the VA and specifically in Southeast Michigan, could you please provide updated answers to the following questions:

1. How many employees at your medical centers are being affected by the VA's employee dismissal announced on February 13th? How many employees at your medical centers are being affected by the VA's employee dismissal announced on February 24th?
2. How will this impact the level of services—from direct healthcare services to beyond—that veterans seeking care at your medical centers are able to receive?
3. Have any research projects at your medical centers been halted or canceled due to recent orders or directives? If so, how many, and please provide a description of each project.
4. How many staff members at your medical centers have accepted the federal buyout package?
5. Our understanding is that some of the positions affected by the dismissal and federal buyout program were management positions at the VA. Their job responsibilities cannot go unfilled. What is your plan to replace these employees or ensure their job responsibilities are being distributed to others?
6. What is your timeline to resume deployment of the Oracle EHR? What funds are allocated for this deployment? How many staff members are working on this deployment, and do you require additional personnel to carry it out?

In addition, please regularly provide my office the following information on your medical facility:

1. Monthly call volume
2. Average call response time
3. Average wait time for veterans to access care
4. Current staffing levels
5. Current staffing needs

Thank you for your continued attention to this concerning matter. As I said before, I remain committed to ensuring veterans across Southeast Michigan and the entire nation receive the benefits and care they deserve, and I will work with my colleagues to ensure their care and safety is not impacted by this administration's actions.

Sincerely,



Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress