

DEBBIE DINGELL

12TH DISTRICT, MICHIGAN

116 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-4071

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND COMMERCE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
HEALTH
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DISTRICT OFFICES:

WOODHAVEN CITY HALL
21869 WEST ROAD
WOODHAVEN, MI 48183
(313) 278-2936

301 WEST MICHIGAN AVENUE
SUITE 400
YPSILANTI, MI 48197
(734) 481-1100

WEBSITE: DEBBIEDINGELL.HOUSE.GOV

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

October 4, 2022

The Honorable Denis R. McDonough
Secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20420

Dear Secretary McDonough,

This letter is to follow up on the number of conversations we have had over the past year regarding the John D. Dingell Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Detroit, Michigan.

You and I share the goal of ensuring veterans receive high-quality, timely care each time they walk into a VA facility. As we have discussed, a number of issues have been raised with me directly by both patients and employees at the Detroit VA. I appreciate the attention you have already given to these reports in recent months and urge you to continue working to address these challenges.

It is important for the House of Representatives to be formally on record in this case, given the fact that my office and Congresswoman Tlaib's office have heard these troubling reports for several years. Senator Peters and Senator Stabenow have recently sent a request to the VA Office of the Inspector General to conduct an external investigation of the Detroit VA, and Congresswoman Tlaib and I will be submitting a formal request to demonstrate this is a bicameral priority. It is our hope a thorough investigation will help determine the full scope of the alleged misconduct across the medical center.

In the meantime, I urge you and your team to publicly address these issues. With the recent removal of the top three administrative officials at the Detroit VA, it is extremely important patients and employees understand you are aware of these problems, these issues are being addressed, and a full investigation is underway. It is critical they are reassured that with a new team in place – alongside your attention at the highest level – work is being done to ensure veterans are receiving the highest quality of care possible at the Detroit VA.

It is my understanding that with a new administration in place, issues like long wait times, poor patient experience, difficulty accessing prescriptions, and challenges with the community care

referral process are being addressed and improved. Challenges with staff shortages are also being addressed to reduce the burden on employees who care deeply about the veterans they serve. These changes have already begun to make a difference.

In recent weeks, several local veteran service organizations (VSOs) have reported veterans feel more welcome while accessing care through the Detroit VA. There is a sense of change in the right direction, and with new senior management, we are hopeful we can continue expanding on this progress.

The VA health system is an institution that was created to honor, serve, and respect the men and women who have served this nation. I remain committed to working to ensure each and every patient who walks through the Detroit VA's doors receives quality, comprehensive, and timely care, and your work to uphold this promise is appreciated.

Once again, I deeply appreciate your attention to this matter and the work you have already begun to address these concerns. I look forward to continuing this important work together to ensure the VA meets the needs of the veterans who have been entrusted to its care.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Debbie Dingell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress