

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

August 25, 2025

The Honorable Douglas A. Collins
Secretary
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20420

Dear Secretary Collins,

I write to express concern regarding the high volume of departures of employees, including those who serve in veteran-facing and mission critical roles, across the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). I respectfully request data regarding the VA workforce to assess the impact of attrition on veteran access to care and benefits at the VA Palo Alto Health Care System (VAPAHCS).

Since assuming your role as Secretary, you have repeatedly stated in congressional hearings and other public appearances that the changes you are making at the VA will not impact the delivery of care and benefits to veterans. However, the July issue of VA's Workforce Dashboard shows that, for this fiscal year, the net losses for veteran-facing employees across VA are estimated at over 8,700.¹ The current number of employee losses under your leadership includes mission-essential jobs, including some that had to be rehired after being cut. Specifically, you have lost over: 2,129 registered nurses, 1,283 medical support assistants, 751 physicians, and 1,294 veteran claim examiners.² In a recent report, the Office of Inspector General (OIG) found all 139 Veterans Health Administration facilities are facing severe staffing shortages, underscoring a deepening crisis that threatens veterans' access to timely, quality care. Severe shortages have risen 50 percent in a year, showing a persistent, systemwide problem that risks worsening under current policies.³

The strength of the VA's workforce is central to delivering high-quality care for our nation's veterans, and your recent decision to terminate collective bargaining agreements for VA workers will drive more employees to leave the department. Many of these union-represented employees fill mission-critical roles, from nurses and engineers to carpenters and painters. Eliminating these agreements strips protections that not only help retain skilled employees, but also address unsafe working conditions. As a result, the department will erode veterans' access to the care and benefits they have earned.

In my district, the VA Palo Alto Health Care System— one of the nation's leading centers for veteran health care and research— provides advanced medical services to more than 67,000 veterans. It is the VA's second-largest research center and home to specialized regional programs for spinal cord injury, polytrauma rehabilitation, blind rehabilitation, and more. Given your recent actions, I request data on all employee departures from January 1, 2025, through August 22th within the VA Palo Alto Health Care System. This data should include:

- Occupation
- Job title
- Grade and step level
- Veteran status

¹ VA Workforce Dashboard, Issue 27 (July 25, 2025), <https://www.va.gov/EMPLOYEE/docs/workforce/VA-Workforce-Dashboard-Issue-27.pdf>

² Ibid.

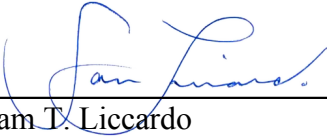
³ OIG Determination of Veterans Health Administration's Severe Occupational Staffing Shortages Fiscal Year 2025 (August 12, 2025), <https://www.vaoig.gov/reports/national-healthcare-review/oig-determination-veterans-health-administrations-severe-1>

- Disability status
- Military spouse status
- Years in service at VA
- Facility/location
- Reason for departure
- Whether the employee was retirement-eligible
- Whether the employee participated in the Deferred Resignation Program (DRP)
- Whether the employee was terminated
- Whether the employee resigned

I also request detailed data on the number and type of veteran appointments cancelled or rescheduled due to staffing shortages within the VAPAHCS since January 1, 2025. This information is critical to understanding workforce trends and ensuring the needs of veterans in the VAPAHCS continue to be met.

Veterans have made tremendous sacrifices to defend our nation, and we must uphold our promise to ensure they receive the care, support, and opportunities they deserve. I value the VA's commitment to our veterans and look forward to your detailed response by September 5, 2025.

Sincerely,



Sam T. Liccardo
Member of Congress