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United States Senate

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October 27, 2021

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

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We write to request an update on the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) coronavirus disease vaccination program for VA personnel. VA set a deadline of October 8, 2021, for health care professionals to receive the vaccine, but as of today, Congress has not yet received data from VA on vaccination rates or disciplinary actions the Department has taken or plans to take against employees who chose not to receive the vaccine. With the November 22, 2021, vaccination deadline for all other VA employees approaching, Congress must assess the impact this policy is having on the ability for veterans to receive care and benefits from VA. We continue to encourage veterans, their families, and those that care for them to protect themselves from COVID-19 through vaccination, but we must ensure that VA has the capacity to continue to care for veterans.

Please provide the following information:

1. Are the deadlines set in VHA Directive 1193 (October 8, 2021, for VHA healthcare personnel and November 22, 2021, for all other VA employees) still in effect? If not, provide a comprehensive list of deadlines for receiving the vaccine and the category of employee that those deadlines apply to.
2. A comprehensive explanation of disciplinary action VA will take against those not in compliance with the mandate. If the union membership of an employee is a factor in the disciplinary actions that may be taken against an employee, please indicate that in the explanation.
3. The number of VHA healthcare personnel subject to the October 8, 2021, deadline who are not in compliance as of today.
4. The number of VHA healthcare personnel subject to the October 8, 2021, deadline who were granted an exemption from the mandate as of today.
5. The number and nature of disciplinary actions that have been taken against VHA healthcare personnel subject to the October 8, 2021, deadline.
6. Current data on the percentage of VA personnel subject to the November 22, 2021, deadline that have been vaccinated as of today.
7. Has the department done an operational assessment regarding the impact that terminations at particular thresholds would have on the provision of service to veterans?

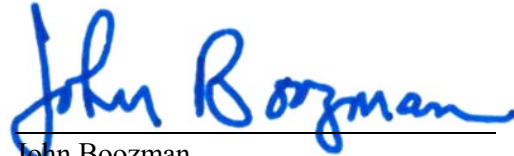
8. Regarding the mandate that government contractors receive a vaccine, does that apply to contract disability examiners and community care network providers? If so, how is that effort progressing and what is the contingency plan if failure to comply by a contractor results in service disruptions to veterans?

Given the importance of this topic, please provide your responses no later than Friday, November 5, 2021.

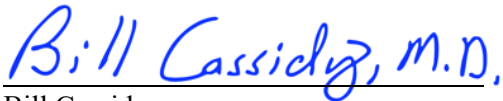
Sincerely,



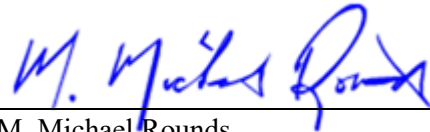
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Ranking Member
Committee on Veterans' Affairs



John Boozman
United States Senator
Committee on Veterans' Affairs



Bill Cassidy
United States Senator
Committee on Veterans' Affairs



M. Michael Rounds
United States Senator
Committee on Veterans' Affairs



Thom Tillis
United States Senator
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Dan Sullivan
United States Senator
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Marsha Blackburn
United States Senator
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Kevin Cramer
United States Senator
Committee on Veterans' Affairs



Tommy Tuberville
United States Senator
Committee on Veterans' Affairs