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Press Release

For Immediate Release

April 6, 2016

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Governor Hassan Calls for Regular Updates on Efforts to Shorten VA Wait Times

CONCORD – As part of her efforts to ensure that veterans and their families receive the full support and care that they deserve, Governor Maggie Hassan sent a letter today to Secretary of Veterans Affairs (VA) Robert McDonald, calling for regular updates on efforts to shorten VA wait times at all VA medical centers that provide care to New Hampshire veterans.

"Our veterans have sacrificed bravely in defense of our freedoms, and we must ensure that they and their families receive the full care and support that they deserve," Governor Hassan wrote. "It is a disservice to subject them to excessively long wait times, and it is also unconscionable to provide inaccurate information that could impact the care our veterans receive, simply to make the data appear better."

"I request an immediate update on all steps that have been taken to correct this unacceptable situation and to ensure that these practices are not ongoing," the Governor continued. "I also request continual updates to the Governor's office and the New Hampshire Office of Veterans Services on the efforts the VA is taking to shorten wait times, provide better care for our state's veterans, and ensure that a situation of this nature never happens again."

The Governor's letter follows recent reports from the VA Office of Inspector General regarding manipulation of records of wait times at the Manchester VA Medical Center and the White River Junction VA Medical Center.

The full text of the Governor's letter is below:

April 6, 2016

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

Dear Secretary McDonald:

I write with concern following recently released reports from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Office of Inspector General regarding wait times at the Manchester VA Medical Center and the White River Junction VA Medical Center. The reports documented troubling information that these medical centers provided misleading data regarding the timeliness and quality of care patients received, and that it became standard practice to manipulate the documentation of wait times.

Our veterans have sacrificed bravely in defense of our freedoms, and we must ensure that they and their families receive the full care and support that they deserve. It is a disservice to subject them to excessively long wait times, and it is also unconscionable to provide inaccurate information that could impact the care our veterans receive, simply to make the data appear better.

I request an immediate update on all steps that have been taken to correct this unacceptable situation and to ensure that these practices are not ongoing. I also request continual updates to the Governor's office and the New Hampshire Office of Veterans Services on the efforts the VA is taking to shorten wait times, provide better care for our state's veterans, and ensure that a situation of this nature never happens again.

Furthermore, I request information on wait times from all other medical centers in the VA New England Health

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Care System that provide care to New Hampshire's veterans.

With every good wish,

Margaret Wood Hassan
Governor

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