

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

COMMITTEES:
APPROPRIATIONS
COMMERCE
HEALTH, EDUCATION,
LABOR, AND PENSIONS

August 19, 2024

Daniel S. Zomcheck
Network Director
VA Great Lakes Health Care System
Four Westbrook Corporate Tower
11301 W. Cermak Road, Suite 810
Westchester, IL 60154

Dear Director Zomcheck,

I write to request information regarding current staffing levels at Veterans Health Administration (VHA) hospitals within the Veterans Integrated Service Network serving the State of Wisconsin and the Great Lakes region (VISN 12). I am concerned about reports of persistent vacancies within VHA facilities, to include provider positions across specialties. These vacancies leave veterans with longer wait times for appointments and place an undue burden on the caseloads of existing VHA providers. I share your goal of providing America's veterans with timely access to high quality care, and it is in pursuit of this goal that I ask for further information regarding staffing at VHA facilities.

I have received the Comprehensive Healthcare Inspection (CHIP) reports for the three VISN 12 facilities in Wisconsin and appreciate your work with the VA Office of Inspector General to provide that information. The CHIP reports, however, provide data on staffing and bed availability only through the end of September 2022. I therefore seek updated information, particularly in light of the increase in VHA enrollment following enactment of the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act of 2022.

For all VHA hospitals in Wisconsin, please provide:

- The number of full-time staff for each hospital for FY22, FY23, FY24 disaggregated by inpatient and outpatient care and by healthcare providers or administrative staff. Please also include attrition rates per department, per fiscal year.
- The number and type of full-time positions for each hospital that are currently vacant. Of these, please list which are currently in recruitment and any the VA does not plan to fill this year.
- The number of inpatient beds for FY22, FY23, and currently, including both beds available and average number of beds filled. Please disaggregate the inpatient beds by the categories reflected in the CHIP reports: community living center; domiciliary; medicine.

I understand the VHA is working to adapt to the increased enrollment seen over the past two years and, as a Member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I continue to work with the Department on appropriate resourcing. Your response providing information specific to VISN 12 and Wisconsin will help in these efforts to ensure that veterans in Wisconsin receive the high quality health care they are owed.

Thank you in advance for your continued support for our veterans and for your prompt response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tammy Baldwin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "T".

Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator