

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

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

September 30, 2022

The Honorable Denis R. McDonough
Secretary of Veterans Affairs
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20420-0001

Dear Secretary McDonough,

I write to you today to follow up on previous communications I have had with the Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) 12 leadership and the Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) Office of Inspector General (OIG) regarding misdiagnoses of Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI) for veterans seeking care at Tomah VA Medical Center (VAMC). Specifically, I am requesting that you conduct a comprehensive investigation into the practices of Dr. Mary Lanska at Tomah VAMC to determine whether there is a broader pattern of misdiagnoses or other practices that may be preventing veterans from receiving care or benefits for certain neurological disorders.

As I have relayed in previous correspondence with the VA, Dr. Lanska has a history of faulty examinations and Compensation and Pension (C&P) conclusions with at least two veterans who were being evaluated for Traumatic Brain Injury. Given the prevalence of TBI and the known history of VA medical professionals misdiagnosing TBI, it is important to determine whether Dr. Lanska's examination and conclusion practices impacted other veterans who saw Dr. Lanska for evaluations either for medical treatment or for C&P examinations throughout the years.

My office has also been made aware of other veterans who claim that Dr. Lanska misdiagnosed other neurological disorders, including one for Multiple Sclerosis (MS) that was determined by a private doctor. In this case, the veteran's private specialist determined their MS was getting worse, yet, upon review of an appeal for a higher rating, Dr. Lanska removed the current disability status, claiming that veteran does not have MS. Further, County Veteran Services Officers have reported an unusual trend of negative opinions from Dr. Lanska when providing examinations for numerous neurological disorders, often time contradicting private specialists' diagnoses.

I understand from communication with VISN 12 and Tomah VA hospital that Dr. Lanska recently passed a clinical review when the VA and OIG looked specifically into the two cases mentioned. However, I am not satisfied that the reviews were comprehensive because they did not look into other cases that have come before Dr. Lanska to determine whether this is a trend that could be leading to veterans not receiving the care and benefits they deserve. Therefore, I am requesting a comprehensive review be conducted looking into Dr. Lanska's professional and

patient history. I ask that this review include interviewing the County Veterans Service Officers identified in my letter to the VA dated May 2, 2022, and an analysis of Dr. Lanska's C&P exam findings to determine if there is a trend of negative opinions. I am also requesting that this investigation take place outside of the VISN 12 structure to ensure a fair and unbiased review.

I look forward to your reply confirming if an additional investigation or review will be conducted, and request your response by October 21, 2022.

Sincerely,

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

Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator