

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 21, 2020

The Honorable Louis DeJoy
Postmaster General
U.S. Postal Service
475 L'Enfant Plaza, S.W.
Washington, DC 20260

Dear Postmaster General DeJoy,

We are writing to express deep concern about recent reports on the delayed delivery of mail-order prescriptions to veterans. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, veterans are especially relying on the United States Postal Service (USPS) for timely delivery of their prescriptions as they stay home. Veterans should not have to choose between jeopardizing their health to pick up prescriptions in-person or facing dangerous delays for vital medication to arrive by mail. It is essential that the USPS work with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to immediately address the delayed delivery of prescriptions by mail so that those who heroically served our country can safely receive the care they need during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The VA provides about 80% of all outpatient prescriptions to veterans via mail-order through the VA Mail Order Pharmacy.¹ On its website, the VA states that prescriptions take about three to five days to be delivered, and recommends that veterans request refills 10 days in advance.² However, beginning in July veterans have had to wait double or triple that amount of time for their prescriptions to arrive, with some wait times as long as three weeks.³ Any pause in taking life-saving medications can have lasting and dangerous impacts on a veteran's health. It is imperative that the USPS works closely with the VA to resolve these issues.

As a result of these reports, we request information on the Postal Service's actions to remedy these delays and implement procedures to ensure the proper delivery of medication, including:

1. What actions is the USPS taking to ensure full and continued coordination between the VA and members of the postal service to ensure the timely delivery and receipt of prescriptions?
2. Has the USPS issued guidance or entered an agreement in coordination with the VA for faster processing of VA mail-order prescriptions?

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https://www.pbm.va.gov/PBM/CMOP/VA_Mail_Order_Pharmacy.asp#:~:text=The%20VA%20Mail%20Order%20Pharmacy%20processes%20470%2C000%20prescriptions%20daily%20and,of%20prescriptions%20in%20the%20mai

2 <https://www.va.gov/health-care/refill-track-prescriptions/>

3 <https://connectingvets.radio.com/articles/usps-delays-veterans-affairs-mail-order-prescriptions>

3. How is the USPS addressing shortcomings in the delivery of VA mail-order prescriptions, including accurate postmarking, tracking, and processing procedures?
4. Has the USPS consulted with the Postal Regulatory Commission regarding recent changes made and additional changes being considered that hinder the delivery of VA prescriptions?
5. Has the Postal Regulatory Commission issued advisory opinions to address deficiencies in the processing and delivery of veterans' prescriptions?
6. What outreach is the USPS executing in coordination with the VA to ensure that veterans are aware of postal service delivery standards and current delays in order to provide adequate time for delivery when requesting prescriptions by mail?
7. Following modifications to the USPS's organizational structure announced on August 7, 2020, what is being done to ensure that VA prescription mail delivery is not further delayed by USPS restructuring?
8. We request that the USPS brief Congress on the causes of the delayed arrival of mail-order prescriptions and the steps the agency is taking in coordination with the VA to ensure the timely, cost-effective and accurate delivery of medications to veterans.

Since 1946, veterans have relied on mail services to receive their prescriptions in a timely manner. For veterans living in rural areas, this is an especially critical issue since picking up prescriptions in-person can be expensive and time-consuming, as they are forced to travel far to the nearest pharmacy. During the COVID-19 pandemic, it is critical that this life-saving service continues to be reliable, dependable, and timely for those who have bravely served this nation.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We look forward to your timely response to this critical issue.

Sincerely,



AMI BERA, M.D.
Member of Congress

GRACE F. NAPOLITANO
Member of Congress

JIM COSTA
Member of Congress

GREGORY W. MEEKS
Member of Congress

ANDY LEVIN
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