

Congress of the United States  
Washington, DC 20515

June 12, 2014

The Honorable Gene Dodaro, Comptroller General  
U.S. Government Accountability Office  
441 G Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Dodaro,

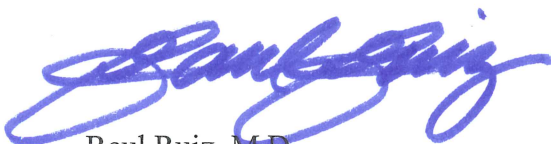
We are writing to request that the Government Accountability Office (GAO) undertake a review of the policies and practices of the Veterans Administration (VA) related to the efficiency of health care delivery and the adequacy of staffing levels to ensure that veterans have timely access to the best possible health care.

We are deeply disturbed by the evidence of systemic failures related to scheduling practices within the VA healthcare system, and reports of veterans dying during long wait times while seeking care at VA facilities. Several reports indicate that physician workload at VA facilities far exceeds recommended ratios, contributing to long wait times. Effective staffing ratios are critical for the delivery of quality care, patient safety and provider retention. In light of ongoing investigations into the mismanagement of VA resources and potential criminal misconduct by VA senior hospital leadership, we request that the GAO evaluate system efficiencies and staffing adequacy.

Specifically we ask that the evaluation include: whether measurable productivity standards are established for medical professionals in the VA, whether VA medical facilities' management is conducting annual reviews of staffing plans to adequately meet health care demand, the physician per veteran ratio for a VA healthcare system for primary and specialty care, and whether appropriate incentives are implemented and monitored for the most effective and efficient delivery of care. Additionally, we request that GAO provide comparable private sector metrics for medical professional productivity standards and physician to patient ratios.

As medical providers, we believe a metrics driven and transparent GAO investigation into the VA is needed to ensure that the necessary resources are obtained in the right places to provide health care for our veterans. We must ensure that the VA corrects the issues that have led to these reprehensible scheduling practices to guarantee all veterans receive the care they deserve. Thank you for your prompt attention to this request.

Sincerely,



Raul Ruiz, M.D.  
Member of Congress



Ami Bera, M.D.  
Member of Congress

J. Michael Smith

Kevin

Carl Roesch

Joe Heck