

The 114th Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

September 3, 2015

Director Joanne M. Krumberger
VA Portland Health Care System
3710 SW U.S. Veterans Hospital Road
Portland, OR 97239

Dear Director Krumberger:

I am writing about the staffing levels of Primary Care Providers (PCP) at the Salem Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC). I recently learned that two temporary PCP's, and in the near future, two permanent PCP are possibly leaving. The inability for the VA Portland Health Care System to recruit and retain healthcare providers is very troubling and appears to be an ongoing problem that has yet to be resolved.

I am deeply concerned about the potential impact these departures may cause our veterans currently served at the Salem CBOC, as well as the wait list for veterans wishing to be served there. The challenges the VA Portland Health Care System is experiencing are not unique and it is affecting the entire VA Health Administration. I request your assistance in addressing my concerns.

How will these departures affect the wait times and access to care for veterans who are currently being served by the Salem CBOC?

Is the VA Portland Health Care System considering having PCP's from other CBOC's temporarily fill-in at the Salem CBOC to cover shortages?

Where does the VA Portland Health Care System currently stand in the recruitment of new PCP's to address the current and expected shortfalls within the VA Portland Health Care System?

What challenges face the VA Portland Health Care System with being able to recruit PCP's and other health care providers? Are OPM regulations preventing the VA Health Administration from being competitive with the private sector?

Are there changes that should be made to the hiring process that would assist you in recruiting not only PCP's but other healthcare practitioners? Can the process be streamlined? Are there incentives that could be offered that would assist with recruitment?

What have been the challenges with retaining PCP's and other health care providers?

Does the VA Portland Health Care System conduct exit interviews? What do the exit interviews reveal are the reasons for PCP's and other health care professionals for leaving?

I look forward to hearing from you and working with you to resolve these issues. Should you have any questions, please contact Michael Klein in my Oregon City district office by calling 503-588-4486 or by email at michael.klein@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kurt Schrader". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "K" and a long, sweeping underline.

KURT SCHRADER
Member of Congress

KS/mk

HC/SK