

## A FEW SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS FOR V. A. IMPROVEMENT

To:

Senator Roberts  
Senator Moran  
Representative Jenkins  
Representative Pompeo

From:

Dr. George McDuffee

Date:

Friday, May 9, 2014

Ref:

<http://www.cnn.com/2014/04/23/health/veterans-dying-health-care-delays/>

“At least 40 U.S. veterans died waiting for appointments at the Phoenix Veterans Affairs Health Care system, many of whom were placed on a secret waiting list.

The secret list was part of an elaborate scheme designed by Veterans Affairs managers in Phoenix who were trying to hide that 1,400 to 1,600 sick veterans were forced to wait months to see a doctor...”

When the VA was created in 1930, there was good reason to establish extensive medical care, rehabilitation and pharmaceutical facilities within the agency, as the required facilities and support services were not available in most parts of the country, if at all.

The circumstances have greatly changed, and it does not appear necessary that the VA continue to provide these services, as less expensive and more convenient options are now widely available.

It is therefore suggested, that the medical, rehabilitation, and pharmaceutical operations of the VA be \*GRADUALLY\* transferred to civilian providers, using the existing Medicare framework and template, including part D for medications. It would appear advisable to concentrate the shift to a single VA administrative district to allow evaluation and any required changes in implementation. What must be avoided is a huge, abrupt change, with the administrative chaos this will cause, and the significant adverse impact this will have on veteran care.

The funding for medical operations should shift to Medicare along with the clients, and some minor changes in reimbursement programming, for example co-pay, will be required, but very considerable cost savings as well as greatly improved service is anticipated.

It is also suggested, given the extensive backlog, that the military services be tasked with the determination of VA benefit eligibility, as they have both the required records and expertise. Consideration should also be given to shifting administration of many of the VA activities, such as the home loan program, to other existing Federal agencies with more extensive resources.