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COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS

335 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515

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August 11, 2016


The Honorable Robert A. McDonald
 Secretary
 U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
 810 Vermont Avenue, NW
 Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary McDonald,

This week it was reported in the media that VA has interior designers on staff at many medical centers throughout the country. In 2011, there were apparently 167 interior designers—most medical centers had an interior designer, and some medical centers had several. I question the need for full time interior designers at individual facilities, especially given VA's consistent pleas for greater health care funding and when a facility is not constructing a new building or a major renovation. In addition to diverting resources away from medical personnel who directly impact veterans' care, it would seem that such a large number of interior designers would encourage the elaborately expensive hospital designs that VA has produced in recent years. You have expressed on several occasions that such architecturally unique designs are not in VA's interest, and I agree.

Please provide a current list of all VA interior designers, including their full salaries, by VISN and facility. Please explain how VA has determined that the design workload at each facility justified or currently justifies a dedicated interior designer, rather than merely one interior designer for the health care system or VISN. In doing so, please explain how it is prudent to have so many interior designers when VA recently threatened to suspend provision of health care services due to a self-inflicted \$3 billion budget shortfall. I request this information by the close of business **Friday, September 2, 2016**. Provide any documents in electronic, soft-copy format. Do not alter the documents in any way, including but not limited to application of redactions or a water mark, or by disabling printing. The deliverables opened by this request will not be closed until the Committee is sufficiently satisfied with the responses provided. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to have your staff contact Dr. Eric Hannel, Majority Staff Director of the Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations, at (202) 225-3569.

Sincerely,



JEFF MILLER
 Chairman

JM/wm

Cc: Mark Takano, Acting Ranking Member