

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 3, 2016

COMMITTEES:
APPROPRIATIONS
BUDGET
HEALTH, EDUCATION,
LABOR, AND PENSIONS
HOMELAND SECURITY
AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

The Honorable Robert McDonald
Secretary of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary McDonald:

I understand that after being fired from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in November 2015, David Houlihan has opened a private psychiatric practice in La Crosse, Wisconsin. As you are aware, the former Chief of Staff at the Tomah VA Medical Center has been the subject of federal investigations involving staff intimidation and retaliation, and the inappropriate prescription of opioids to veterans.

Last August a report released by the Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General (VA OIG) confirmed that the Tomah VA physicians entrusted with veterans care, including Houlihan, tragically failed all veterans and their families when they allowed a young Marine Veteran to die at the facility. The actions then taken by the VA to remove the Tomah VAMC Chief of Staff from federal employment and revoke his clinical privileges were long overdue.

Unquestionably, Mr. Houlihan has no business treating our Nation's veterans and their families - whether at a VA facility or through care funded by the Department in the community. As such, I request that VA refrain from referring patients to Mr. Houlihan through its authority to pay for veterans' care in the community and take any necessary steps to ensure that HealthNet prohibit all referrals to him through the VA Choice Program. It is essential that VA ensure that those who pose a threat to patient safety be denied the opportunity to treat veterans.

I look forward to your response on this important matter.

Sincerely,



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator