

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

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AND NATURAL RESOURCES

June 25, 2014

Ms. Catherine Gromek
Veterans Affairs
Office of Inspector General

Dear Ms. Gromek:

I am writing on behalf of my constituent, who would like to remain anonymous, regarding concerns with treatment at the Tomah, Wisconsin VA.

I would appreciate your full review and investigation of the following concerns expressed by my constituent:

- A large percentage of veterans being treated for substance abuse are for substances including opiates, benzodiazepines and stimulants which were originally prescribed by VA providers. These same veterans continue to be prescribed these substances of abuse while in active treatment.
- There are a high number of instances in which controlled substances are used prior to alternative interventions first being trialed.
- National guidelines for the treatment of PTSD indicate that veterans in active PTSD treatment should not be prescribed benzodiazepines for the best possible treatment outcome. However, this is standard practice at the Tomah VA and employees are pressured by management to prescribe substances that are contraindicated by VA National Guidelines. The Office of Mental Health has a beginning awareness of the Tomah VA prescribing practices however the process is moving too slow and veterans continue to be hurt waiting for government intervention.

Please inform my office of your findings and forward all correspondence to the attention of Mike Helbick in my Milwaukee Senate office at 633 W. Wisconsin Ave., Suite 1920, Milwaukee, WI 53203, or via telephone at 414-297-4451. Thank you for your time and prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator

TB:mh
Enclosure