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**Congress of the United States**  
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NATIONAL SECURITY

August 6, 2014

Ms. Elizabeth J. Freeman  
Interim Network Director  
335 E. Germann Road  
Suite 201  
Gilbert, AZ 85297

Dear Ms. Freeman,

I am writing in regards to results of the Access Audits that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) performed in May 2014. While I commend the VA for taking the necessary steps to evaluate VA health facilities across the country, we cannot stop here. The Access Audit should only be the first step in solving the scheduling and access problems we have seen throughout the VA system.

I understand that the audit has significant limitations and is not a full investigation into the scheduling and access issues at the VA. However, the results of the Access Audit for VISN 18 and especially for the New Mexico VA Health Care System (NMVAHCS) in Albuquerque are disturbing and leave me with more questions about the quality of care our veterans are receiving at the facility:

- The audit showed employees within the NMVAHCS were tracking appointment requests outside the appropriate scheduling system. Where were these appointments being tracked and who gave the directive to use these alternative lists?
- The audit also determined that the desired date of when veterans wanted to schedule an appointment was being misused by some individuals at the NMVAHCS. Who instructed these individuals to misuse or manipulate the desire date system?
- Finally, 69.23% of those interviewed at the NMVAHCS indicated that there were other obstacles that hinder veterans' timely access to care. Can you elaborate on what these obstacles are and how we can alleviate them?

This information is critical to understanding the extent of the problems at the NMVAHCS. We owe it to our veterans to address the issues that are restricting access to care for our veterans.

Thank you for your full and fair consideration of my requests consistent with applicable law, rules, and regulations. I look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,



Michelle Lujan Grisham  
Member of Congress