

STEVE RUSSELL

5TH DISTRICT, OKLAHOMA

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3605

November 17, 2015

Secretary Robert A. McDonald
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Ave NW
Washington, D.C. 20420

Secretary McDonald:

The Oklahoma City VA Medical Center serves more than 300,000 veterans and 70,000 disabled veterans who claim pensions in the Oklahoma City area. We find it completely unacceptable that their care has been compromised by the lack of official leadership at this location.

Since Dec. 10, 2014, Dr. Gerald K. Darnell has held the position of acting director with limited authority, as the Medical Center Director position remains vacant. Without an official director to manage staffing for nearly one year, the Cardiac Surgery Program lacks cardiothoracic surgeons and was placed on "temporary pause" on July 1, 2015. As you may be aware, the Oklahoma City VA was heavily criticized in audits for the congestive heart failure care.

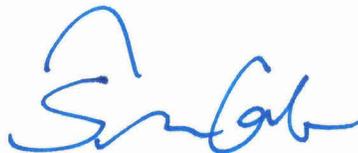
For sake of the veterans who sacrificed their wellbeing for our nation, we ask that the Department of Veterans Affairs assign Dr. Gerald K. Darnell as the official Medical Center Director, or respond with a different course of action to resolve this issue in a timely manner. We believe that these veterans deserve nothing less than swift action, efficient health care, and effective leadership. As one of the VA hospitals under continued scrutiny, our veterans are not well served by delays in leadership positions being filled.

We look forward to receiving your response. Please direct your communication to my staff member Cody Hoefler at Cody.Hoefler@mail.house.gov by December 1, 2015.

Sincerely,



Steve Russell
Member of Congress
Oklahoma's Fifth District



Tom Cole
Member of Congress
Oklahoma's Forth District



Markwayne Mullin
Member of Congress
Oklahoma's Second District



Jim Bridenstine
Member of Congress
Oklahoma's First District