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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

MIKE DOYLE
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December 13, 2012

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The Honorable Jeff Miller
Chairman
Committee on Veterans' Affairs
335 Cannon HOB
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Michael H. Michaud
Ranking Member
Committee on Veterans' Affairs
335 Cannon HOB
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman and Mr. Ranking Member:

I am writing to respectfully request that the House Veterans' Affairs Committee hold an investigative hearing to examine the facts behind a lethal outbreak of legionnaire's disease at the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System (VAPHS).

From November of 2011 to November of 2012, there have been five identified Veterans that were patients at the VAPHS who are known to have been infected with legionella during their hospitalization at the Oakland, PA facility. There has been at least one confirmed fatality; however the breadth of this outbreak remains under question.

My office has been in constant communication with the VA and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) since the outbreak was reported in local news outlets last month.

I believe that it is critical we establish the source of the outbreak and address a clear breach in the water purification system. Various reports point to a myriad of potential failures, ranging from questions about maintenance and upkeep to concerns about the effectiveness of the facility's water treatment system.

More concerning are reports indicating that people within the VAPHS might have been aware of unmet system maintenance and recalibration requirements for some time before the outbreak.

I believe that your Committee should utilize all tools available, including subpoena power, to assist with determining the cause of this deadly outbreak to protect against future failures. It is

imperative that we identify the problem and address it and restore public confidence in the VAPHS.

I ask you to convene a hearing on this issue expeditiously so that we can come to a better understanding of where systematic failures occurred, and how they can best be addressed in the future. I have attached several recent news items for your review.

As always, I appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mike Doyle". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mike" and last name "Doyle" clearly distinguishable.

Mike Doyle
Member of Congress

attachments