



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Under Secretary for Health
Washington DC 20420

June 19, 2015

The Honorable Claire McCaskill
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator McCaskill:

Thank you for the May 20, 2015, cosigned letter to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) expressing concerns about leadership in the St. Louis VA Health Care System (STLVAHCS) and requesting VA's plan to secure a permanent STLVAHCS Director. I am responding on behalf of the Department.

We recognize your concerns about the STLVAHCS Director position. Strong medical center leadership is critical to maintaining the high standards and quality of care of Veterans being served by this system. You have my personal assurance that VA is committed to hiring the best qualified candidate for the STLVAHCS Director position as soon as possible.

VA's selection of Senior Executive Service (SES) leaders is a thorough and rigorous process. The STLVAHCS Director position became vacant on July 14, 2013. Between July 2013 and March 2015, VHA announced the position vacancy seven times, as detailed on the enclosed timeline.

VA's Corporate Senior Executive Management Office (CSEMO) oversees the recruitment process for all Senior Executive Service (SES) positions. CSEMO conducts a qualification analysis to determine candidates minimally qualified for the VA Medical Center Director position. The analysis is based on how well the applicant addressed the five (5) SES Executive Core Qualifications (ECQs) and the specific technical qualification(s) for the position. Based on the qualification analysis, CSEMO submits a list of best-qualified applicants to the appropriate Veterans Integrated Systems Networks (VISN) Director for consideration. The VA Executive Resources Board (ERB) which is responsible for conducting the merit staffing process for career entry into the SES conducts an in-depth evaluation and ranking to determine the best-qualified competitive candidates. The assessment is based on the applicant's resume, responses to the five (5) ECQs and the technical qualifications. The highest ranking applicants are placed on the best-qualified competitive list and also sent to the VISN Director for consideration.

After a selection is made, the nomination is forwarded to VHA leadership for preliminary approval. VHA conducts a comprehensive background check, which includes the verification of the nominee's credentials and references check. The nomination

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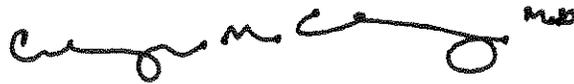
package is then submitted to CSEMO for concurrence and to the VA Chief of Staff for final approval. The Secretary has delegated approval of all senior executive nominations to the VA COS.

Before placing the applicant into the position, if the nominee is not already certified, he or she is required to obtain SES certification of his or her ECQs from the Office of Personnel Management's Qualification Review Board. Once the applicant's ECQs are approved by OPM, the applicant may be placed into the SES position.

In the case of the STLVHCS Director position, a nominee has been identified, the clearances and reference checks are complete, and the nominee is currently going through the final Departmental approval process. Although privacy laws limit the specific details that I am able to share about the nominee at this time, I am confident that we will have the new permanent Director on board very soon.

I hope that your concerns have been satisfactorily addressed. Should you have any additional questions, please have a member of your staff contact Mr. Tony L. Adams, Congressional Relations Officer, at (202) 461-6473 or by email at Tony.Adams@va.gov. A similar response was sent to Senator Roy Blunt.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carolyn M. Clancy" with a small "MD" to the right.

Carolyn M. Clancy, MD
Interim Under Secretary for Health

Enclosure

St Louis VA Medical Health System Recruitment Timeline

Date	Action
July 14, 2013	Position became vacant
April 22, 2013	1 st announcement opens
May 06, 2013	No applications were received
June 4, 2013	2 nd announcement opens
July 22, 2013	An applicant was selected but then nominated for, and accepted an assignment at another facility.
July 29, 2013	3 rd announcement opens
September 23, 2013	There were no qualified applicants.
October 24, 2013	4 th announcement opens
May 23, 2014	An individual was nominated but subsequently declined the position.
May 29, 2014	5 th announcement opens
June 12, 2014	The resume review found that no applicant displayed the depth of experience in their resume to merit an interview.
August 6, 2014	6 th announcement opens
December 12, 2014	An applicant was under consideration but lacked the experience required to run a complex facility.
December 23, 2014	7 th announcement opens
March 23, 2015	VA identified a suitable nominee with the right experience needed to lead VASTLHCS and is currently finalizing this nominee for SecVA approval.