



PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-4000

MAR 31 2016

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This letter is in response to the Senate Report 114-63, page 203, accompanying H.R. 2029, the Department of Defense (DoD) Appropriations Bill, 2016, which requested the Secretary of Defense to report on the status of implementing the recommendations in the DoD Inspector General (IG) "Audit of the Transfer of DoD Medical Records to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)." In the Department's official response to the DoD IG, the Office of the Secretary of Defense concurred with the recommendations to update Service Treatment Record (STR) policy and improve oversight of the STR Life Cycle Management.

The DoD has made considerable progress with implementing both recommendations. The updated DoD Instruction 6040.45, "DoD Health Record Life-Cycle Management," dated November 16, 2015, governs the entire health record to include the STR. The update includes policy requirements for the Services to certify STRs as complete and to perform annual reviews for completeness with Service members. Additionally, the Defense Health Agency created the Patient Administration Office (PAO) to establish a formal joint record management program to ensure Service compliance with STR policies and procedures. A concept of operations was approved for the PAO that includes site visits to military treatment facilities and Service Central STR Processing cells to ensure compliance with DoD timeliness and accuracy policies.

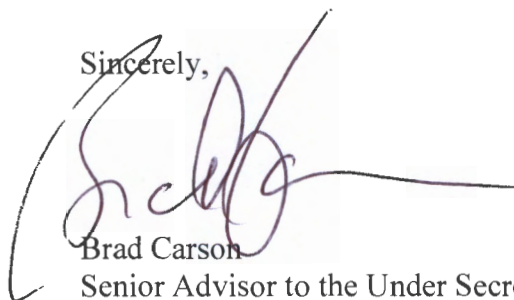
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The Secretary of Defense issued a memorandum to the Secretaries of the Military Departments on June 23, 2014, tasking them to develop formal improvement plans in the timely provision of STRs to the VA. Subsequent to that memorandum, the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness issued Implementation Instructions for Availability of Records for the VA on July 7, 2014. The Military Departments continue to report timeliness data to the Executive Director, DoD/VA Collaboration Office, on a weekly basis. As of January 16, 2016, the VBA has requested 166,038 STRs, and the DoD has completed 163,422 (98.4 percent) of those requests.

Current DoD policy is to make STRs available to the VA within 45 business days to allow sufficient time for most late-flowing documents (i.e., private sector care documentation) to be in the file the VBA uses and ensures the record is accurate and complete. To more closely align with the VBA's timeliness metric, the Department imposed aspirational targets on the Services to upload 95 percent of all Active Duty and 75 percent of all Reserve Component STRs into HAIMS within 45 calendar days by September 30, 2016. The Active Component is on track to meet the 95 percent target, and the Reserves continue to strive toward the 75 percent target.

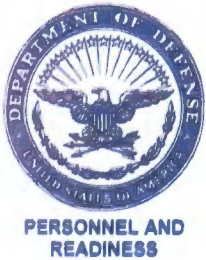
Thank you for your interest in the health and well-being of our Service members, veterans, and their families. A similar letter is being sent to the other congressional defense committees.

Sincerely,

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Brad Carson
Senior Advisor to the Under Secretary of
Defense for Personnel and Readiness,
Performing the Duties of the Principal
Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for
Personnel and Readiness

cc:
The Honorable Richard J. Durbin
Vice Chairman



OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-4000

MAR 31 2016

The Honorable Rodney P. Frelinghuysen
Chairman
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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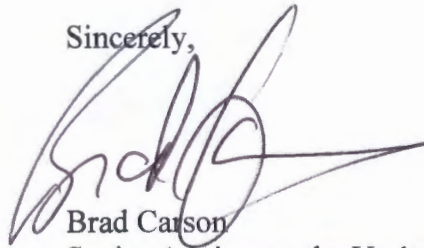
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Brad Carson
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Personnel and Readiness

cc:
The Honorable Peter J. Visclosky
Ranking Member



OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-4000

MAR 31 2016

The Honorable William M. "Mac" Thornberry
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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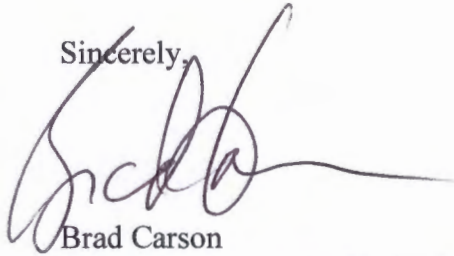
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cc:
The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member



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The Honorable John McCain
Chairman
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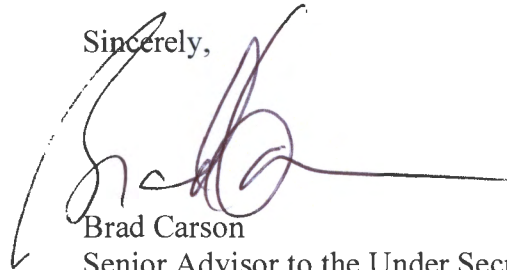
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