



PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

MAY - 6 2009

The Honorable Carl Levin
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This letter provides the final report to Congress on the request in the Joint Explanatory Statement accompanying H.R. 2638, Joint Explanatory Statement for 2009, regarding the Office for Military Health System (MHS) Strategic Communications and the contract awarded to provide support for that office.

The MHS mission is to provide health care, conduct medical research, and provide medical education and training. The MHS employs 137,000 people who provide health care in 65 hospitals, 412 clinics, and 414 dental clinics at installations and facilities located throughout the nation, overseas, and in contingency and combat theater operations worldwide. The MHS has 36 medical research laboratories, 18 clinical investigation programs, and multiple academic research activities within the Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences (USU). The USU also provides medical education, as do the Military Services' graduate medical education programs and the Military Enlisted Training Command.

In 2007, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs (ASD (HA)) recognized that there was no central, coordinating office for strategic communications across the MHS. He began the process to establish such an office by diverting resources from his Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Force Health Protection and Readiness to redesign the Health Affairs Web site, which had been very policy focused. He wanted a vibrant Web site that provided daily information on the MHS. Although the Web site was a good start, it needed someone to coordinate and oversee its development and evolution, and needed strategic communications support to develop content and assure its currency. That could not be done entirely within existing resources because the public affairs or communications offices in the various Department of Defense components, including the TRICARE Management Activity (TMA) and Services offices, were focused on their individual organizations' missions and tasks.

Therefore, on January 22, 2008, the ASD (HA) appointed Michael E. Kilpatrick, MD, as the Director of MHS Strategic Communications. The goals established were to educate audiences about the MHS, describe what the MHS is doing and to personalize the MHS for audiences. The Director met with leadership and the communications leaders from USU; the Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury (DCoE); TMA; the Health Affairs offices of Chief Information, Force Health Protection and Readiness (FHP&R), and Clinical and Program Policy; as well as each Military Department Surgeon General to discuss the new Office of MHS Strategic Communications and to begin coordination of efforts. In April 2008, the Director of MHS Strategic Communications held an off-site with communications teams from these same offices to set communication program goals and objectives, understand areas of responsibility, and assure responsibilities did not overlap. We also assured these goals and objectives were aligned with those of the MHS Strategic Plan.

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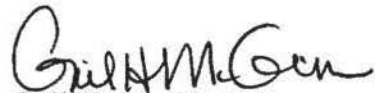
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communication mission and improve the health care of our Service members, veterans, and their families.

Thank you for your continued support of the Military Health System.

Sincerely,

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Gail H. McGinn
Performing the Duties of the
Under Secretary of Defense
(Personnel and Readiness)

cc:
The Honorable Lindsey O. Graham
Ranking Member



OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

PERSONNEL AND
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MAY - 6 2009

The Honorable Ike Skelton
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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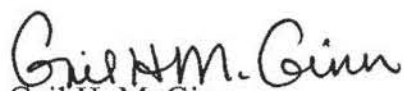
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Gail H. McGinn
Performing the Duties of the
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(Personnel and Readiness)

cc:
The Honorable John M. McHugh
Ranking Member



OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

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MAY - 6 2009

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

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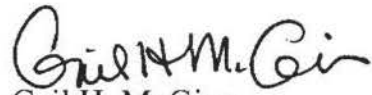
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Ranking Member



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Chairman, Subcommittee on Personnel
Committee on Armed Services
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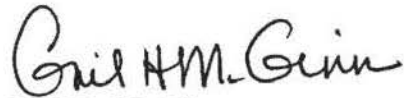
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The Honorable Susan Davis
Chairwoman, Subcommittee on Military Personnel
Committee on Armed Services
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Gail H. McGinn
Performing the Duties of the
Under Secretary of Defense
(Personnel and Readiness)

cc:
The Honorable Joe Wilson
Ranking Member



OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

MAY - 6 2009

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
Chairman, Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

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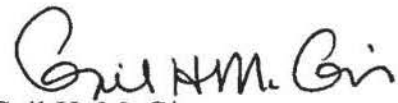
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Performing the Duties of the
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(Personnel and Readiness)

cc:
The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member



OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

MAY - 6 2009

The Honorable David R. Obey
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations
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Washington, DC 20515

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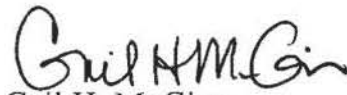
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PERSONNEL AND
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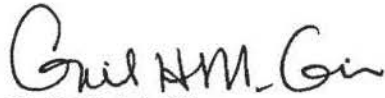
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