



PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

**4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-4000**

MAY 21 2015

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 Joint Explanatory Statement, page 105, accompanying H.R. 83, the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year (FY) 2015, which requested the Secretary of Defense to implement the recommendations in the Department of Defense Inspector General (DoD IG) Audit Report, "Transfer of DoD Service Treatment 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 is well underway with implementing both recommendations. An update to DoD Instruction 6040.45, "Service Treatment Record (STR) and Non-Service Treatment Records (NSTR) Life-Cycle Management," which governs the STR and addresses all DoD IG recommendations is currently in development. Additionally, the Defense Health Agency established the Patient Administration Office Branch (PAO) to ensure service compliance with STR policies and procedures. The Chief position was filled on December 28, 2014, with additional staffing to be accomplished throughout the remainder of FY 2015. 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.

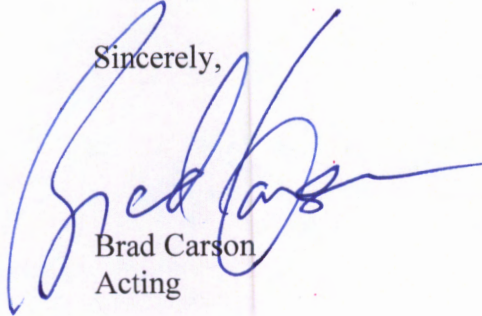
The Secretary of Defense issued a Memorandum to the Secretaries of the Military Departments on June 23, 2014, tasking them to develop formal improvement plans in the timely provision of STRs to the VA. Subsequent to that Memorandum, the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness issued Implementation Instructions for Availability of Records for the VA on July 7, 2014. The Military Departments are reporting timeliness data to the Executive Director, DoD/VA Collaboration Office on a weekly basis. As of March 3, 2015, the Veterans Benefits Administration has requested approximately 70,000 STRs, and the DoD has completed 93% of those requests. The Department projects that 4,500 to 5,000 new STRs will be made available weekly via the Health Artifact and Image Management Solution (HAIMS).

The Joint Explanatory Statement also noted that the DoD IG report found that delays with HAIMS and insufficient server capacity contributed to poor timeliness and completeness rates. The agreement includes \$3,600,000 for the continuation and improvement of HAIMS and expects this funding to be utilized to address these issues.

These funds, which are currently in the Defense Business Systems funds certification process, will support the continued operation and improvement of HAIMS through: 1) the establishment of a capacity test environment enabling accurate projections of system usage and corresponding infrastructure requirements; 2) implementation of around-the-clock system monitoring with alerts capabilities; 3) the addition of a performance testing requirement; and, 4) procurement of software licenses required to allow the vendor to enhance the software-based outcomes of that performance testing. Additional improvements already underway include the upgrade of Commercial-Off-The-Shelf products that are part of HAIMS' secure, Web-based, enterprise architecture. This upgrade is expected to be completed by the end of FY 2015, and will improve the system's capacity and provide the scalability needed to support expected growth in utilization.

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
Acting

cc:
The Honorable Richard J. Durbin
Vice Chairman



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UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-4000

MAY 21 2015

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

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This letter is in response to the Joint Explanatory Statement, page 105, accompanying H.R. 83, the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year (FY) 2015, which requested the Secretary of Defense to implement the recommendations in the Department of Defense Inspector General (DoD IG) Audit Report, "Transfer of DoD Service Treatment 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.

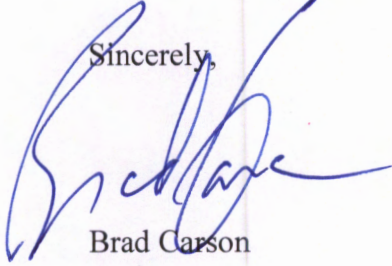
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The Joint Explanatory Statement also noted that the DoD IG report found that delays with HAIMS and insufficient server capacity contributed to poor timeliness and completeness rates. The agreement includes \$3,600,000 for the continuation and improvement of HAIMS and expects this funding to be utilized to address these issues.

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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,

Brad Carson
Acting

cc:
The Honorable Peter J. Visclosky
Ranking Member



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UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-4000

MAY 21 2015

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

Dear Mr. Chairman:

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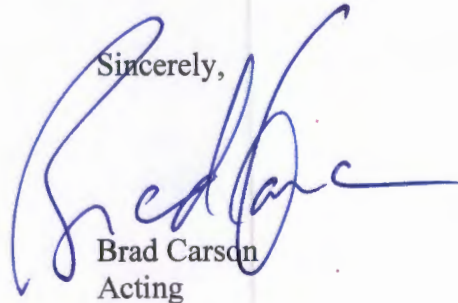
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Sincerely,

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Brad Carson
Acting

cc:
The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member



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UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
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MAY 4 1 2015

The Honorable John McCain
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

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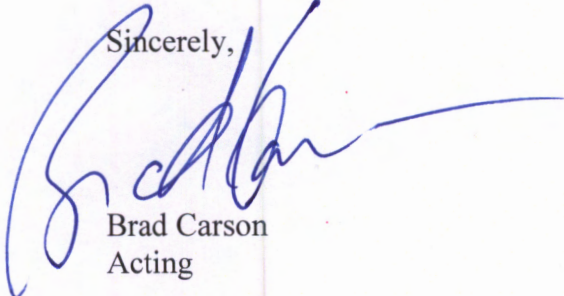
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Sincerely,

Brad Carson
Acting

cc:
The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member



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MAY 21 2015

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
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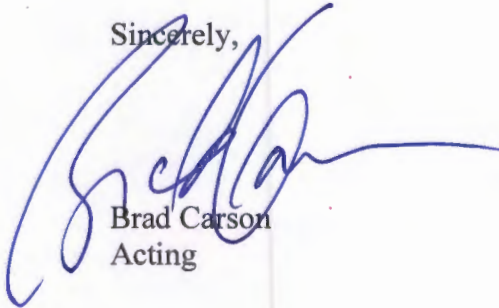
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Brad Carson
Acting

cc:
The Honorable Barbara A. Mikulski
Vice Chairwoman



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MAY 21 2015

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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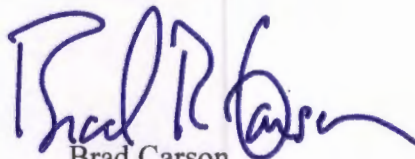
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Brad Carson
Acting

cc:
The Honorable Nita M. Lowey
Ranking Member