

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 2, 2015

Harris Meyer
Managing Editor
Modern Healthcare
150 N. Michigan Avenue
Chicago, IL 60601

Gregg Blesch
Managing Editor - Digital
Modern Healthcare
150 N. Michigan Avenue
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Dear Mr. Meyer and Mr. Blesch:

On behalf of Louisiana veterans, we express extreme dissatisfaction with *Modern Healthcare's* selection of Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Secretary Robert McDonald as a "Healthcare Winner in 2014." Your description says he "won \$16 billion dollars from Congress to improve care for veterans." Beyond funding provided by Congress, veterans also deserve a competent, proactive leader who will reverse the VA's poor performance nationwide. Unfortunately, this VA Secretary remains unresponsive to chronic medical access problems for Louisiana veterans.

Secretary McDonald has yet to acknowledge or reply to our Congressional delegation's September 2014 letter asking him to improve the timeliness of payments for veterans' emergency medical services at hospitals and from ambulance providers outside the VA, as directed by the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014. The VA has admitted to years of inappropriate claim denials that harmed the credit ratings of Louisiana veterans. While the Secretary delivers lofty speeches about rebuilding trust, these unjust denials force thousands of Louisiana veterans into a lengthy and avoidable appeals process before judges in Washington, D.C. As a "healthcare winner," the new Secretary should care enough to respond to Congressional concerns about clear harm to veterans and demonstrate personal leadership on these chronic problems.

Enclosed for your review is a copy of our delegation's unanswered letter. Until Secretary McDonald acknowledges ongoing concerns for Louisiana veterans, we do not believe he is deserving of the title "healthcare winner."

Sincerely,



David Vitter
United States Senator



Charles W. Boustany, Jr., M.D.
Member of Congress