



AUG 06 2015

The Honorable Judith T. Won Pat, Ed.D.

Speaker

I Mina' Trentai Tres Na Liheslaturan Guåhan

155 Hesler Place

Hagåtña, Guam 96910

VIA: ^{for: R.C. Ad} The Honorable Rory J. Respicio

Chairperson, Committee on Rules

2015 AUG -7 PM 4: 51

RE: Committee Report on Resolution No. 111-33 (COR) As Substituted

Dear Speaker Won Pat:

Transmitted herewith is the Committee Report on *As Substituted* Resolution No. 111-33 (COR) – “Relative to requesting Guam’s Delegate to the Congress of the United States to call for an investigation from the Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General to substantiate allegations into access barriers adversely affecting the quality of primary and specialty care, and mismanagement at the Veterans Affairs Guam Community Based Outpatient Clinic and the Guam Vet Center.”

Committee votes are as follows:

- TO PASS
- TO NOT PASS
- TO REPORT OUT ONLY
- TO ABSTAIN
- TO PLACE IN INACTIVE FILE

Respectfully,

SENATOR FRANK B. AGUON, JR.

Committee Chairman of Guam U.S. Military Relocation | Public Safety | Judiciary
I Mina' Trentai Tres Na Liheslaturan Guåhan | 33rd Guam Legislature

Senator
FRANK B. AGUON, JR.
Chairman

Senator
Thomas C. Ada
Vice Chairman

Vice-Speaker
Benjamin J.F. Cruz
Member

Senator
Rory J. Respicio
Member

Senator
Dennis G. Rodriguez, Jr.
Member

Senator
Dr. Nerissa B. Underwood, Ph.D.
Member

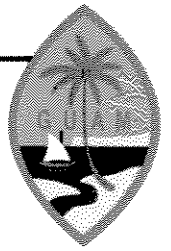
Senator
V. Anthony Ada
Member

Senator
Frank F. Blas Jr.
Member

Senator
James V. Espaldon
Member

Senator
Brant T. McCreddie
Member

Speaker
Dr. Judith T. Won Pat, Ed.D.
Ex-Officio



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COMMITTEE REPORT ON

AS SUBSTITUTED

RESOLUTION NO. 111-33 (COR)

“Relative to requesting Guam’s Delegate to the Congress of the United States to call for an investigation from the Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General to substantiate allegations into access barriers adversely affecting the quality of primary and specialty care, and mismanagement at the Veterans Affairs Guam Community Based Outpatient Clinic and the Guam Vet Center.”



AUG 05 2015

MEMORANDUM

To: All Members
Committee on U.S. Military Relocation, Public Safety and Judiciary

From: SENATOR FRANK B. AGUON, JR. 
Committee Chairperson

Subject: Committee Report on Resolution No. 111-33 (COR) *As Substituted*

Transmitted herewith for your consideration is the Committee Report on *As Substituted* Resolution No. 111-33 (COR) – “Relative to requesting Guam’s Delegate to the Congress of the United States to call for an investigation from the Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General to substantiate allegations into access barriers adversely affecting the quality of primary and specialty care, and mismanagement at the Veterans Affairs Guam Community Based Outpatient Clinic and the Guam Vet Center.”

This report includes the following:

- Committee Vote Sheet
- Committee Report Digest
- Copy of *As Substituted* Resolution No. 111-33 (COR)
- Copy of Resolution No. 111-33 (COR)
- Public Hearing Sign-in Sheet
- Copies of Submitted Testimony & Supporting Documents
- Copy of COR Referral of Resolution No. 111-33 (COR)
- Notices of Public Hearing
- Copy of the Public Hearing Agenda
- Related News Reports

Please take the appropriate action on the attached vote sheet. Your attention to this matter is greatly appreciated. Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Si Yu'os ma'ãse'!

Senator
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Chairman

Senator
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Vice Chairman

Vice-Speaker
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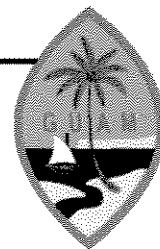
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Ex-Officio



COMMITTEE VOTING SHEET

Resolution No. 111-33 (COR) - As Substituted - "Relative to requesting Guam's Delegate to the Congress of the United States to call for an investigation from the Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General to substantiate allegations into access barriers adversely affecting the quality of primary and specialty care, and mismanagement at the Veterans Affairs Guam Community Based Outpatient Clinic and the Guam Vet Center." sponsored by Senator FRANK B. AGUON, JR., T.C. Ada, T.A. Morrison

Senator FRANK B. AGUON, JR. Chairman

Senator Thomas C. Ada Vice Chairman

Vice-Speaker Benjamin J.F. Cruz Member

Senator Rory J. Respicio Member

Senator Dennis G. Rodriguez, Jr. Member

Senator Dr. Nerissa B. Underwood, Ph.D. Member

Senator V. Anthony Ada Member

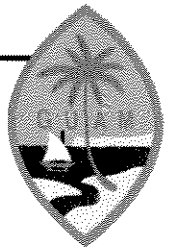
Senator Frank F. Blas Jr. Member

Senator James V. Espaldon Member

Senator Brant T. McCreadie Member

Speaker Dr. Judith T. Won Pat, Ed.D. Ex-Officio

Table with 7 columns: COMMITTEE MEMBERS, SIGNATURE, TO DO PASS, TO NOT PASS, TO REPORT OUT ONLY, TO ABSTAIN, TO PLACE IN INACTIVE FILE. Rows include AGUON, FRANK B. JR., ADA, THOMAS C., VICE-SPEAKER CRUZ, BENJAMIN J.F., RESPICIO, RORY J., RODRIGUEZ, DENNIS G. JR., UNDERWOOD, NERISSA B. PH.D., ADA, V. ANTHONY, BLAS, FRANK F. JR., ESPALDON, JAMES V., MCCREADIE, BRANT T., and SPEAKER WON PAT, JUDITH T. Ed.D. Ex-Officio.



COMMITTEE REPORT DIGEST

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Ex-Officio

I. OVERVIEW

Resolution No. 111-33 (COR) was introduced on May 22, 2015, by Senator Frank B. Aguon Jr., Senator T.C. Ada, Senator Tommy Morrison, and was subsequently referred by the Committee on Rules to the Committee on Guam US Military Relocation, Public Safety and Judiciary on May 26, 2015.

The Committee on Guam US Military Relocation, Public Safety and Judiciary convened a public hearing on Resolution No. 111-33 (COR) on Tuesday, June 23, 2015 at 5:00PM in *I Liheslatura's* Public Hearing Room.

Public Notice Requirements

Public Hearing notices were disseminated via e-mail to all senators and all main media broadcasting outlets on Tuesday, June 16, 2015 (5-Day Notice), and again on Thursday, June 18, 2015 (48-Hour Notice). Notices were also published in the Guam Pacific Daily Newspaper on Tuesday, June 16, 2015 and Thursday, June 18, 2015.

Senators Present

Senator Frank B. Aguon, Jr., Chairperson
Senator Tom Ada, Vice Chairperson
Vice Speaker B.J. Cruz, Committee Member
Senator Tommy Morrison
Senator Mary Torres

The public hearing was Called-to-Order at 5:00 PM.

II. SUMMARY OF TESTIMONY & DISCUSSION

Chairman Aguon:

Good evening ladies and gentlemen. This public hearing sponsored by the committee on the Guam U.S. Military Relocation, Public Safety, and Judiciary is hereby convened. To my immediate right is Vice Speaker BJ Cruz, a member of the committee, thank you very much Mr. Vice Speaker for joining us this evening, and to my immediate left is Senator Tom Ada who is the chairman of the Guam Veterans Committee and also the vice chair of this particular committee. So thank you very much Senator Tom for joining us. I understand some of the other senators will be joining us very shortly.

Chairman Aguon:

Ladies and Gentlemen we have one particular item that is scheduled for the agenda, and that is Resolution 111-33, and this has been initially filed on the 22nd of May, and I want to, as chair and as sponsor, I would like to thank our media partners for sharing the information that is contained in here and also being very vocal and open in terms of some of the activities taking place with services being provided to our Veteran community. So I want to start off with that. This resolution, Resolution Number 111-33 (COR), is relative to requesting Guam's delegate to the United States to call for an investigation from the Veteran's Affairs Office of the Inspector General to substantiate allegations into access barriers adversely affecting the quality of primary and specialty care and mismanagement at the Veterans Affairs Community Based Outpatient Clinic and the Guam Vet Center. Since the introduction of this particular resolution, there was additional information that was provided to myself, and I believe it was shared with the chair of the Veterans Affairs Committee with regards to CBOC. That at that time there was a physician, a primary physician, that was departing the Veterans clinic as of the end of May, but shortly thereafter the first of June, there was a replacement physician specifically for the Veterans clinic that was to commence that individual's responsibility on the first of June. In conjunction with that additional information that was provided to myself and was shared with members of the Legislature was that there was an additional physician that was hired specifically for the Community Outreach Program, and that was the Community Outreach Program that is the additional services being provided by the CBOC as it applies to the use of the public health centers in the north on Mondays and Tuesdays and then in the South on Wednesdays and Thursdays or Thursdays and Fridays, one of the two other days. That was the information that was received. Also, in addition to that information that was provided to myself, there were additional information that as of October of last year, there were six nurses on board at CBOC, the Community Based Outpatient Clinic, as of the date of notification of current information in the latter part of May, there were six additional nurses that were already brought on board, and then three additional nurses that were going to be brought in during the course of the summer. That would add to a total of 15 nurses, and as a precursor to this particular resolution, I'm sharing that information not only with the public but with everyone in the public and the veterans community because I want to ensure that the information that is being disseminated by myself or the chairman of the veterans affairs committee or any member of the Legislature, if in fact it originates from me by virtue of this resolution, I want to make sure that I'm open and transparent and current with the information that is being provided and that reflects what has taken place in our veterans clinic. I want to also say this much. With many of our veterans who have shared concerns since the introduction of this resolution, I want to thank you all very much for reaching out to my office and sharing not only your concerns but also sharing some positive things that are taking place in terms of benefits being provided to our veteran community as well as medical treatment services that are being provided. This resolution and I want to recognize the two cosponsors, Senator Tom Ada and Senator Tommy Morrison. Thank you very much senators for cosponsoring this resolution. If, at the very least, this resolution is endorsed and welcomed by the CBOC and the Veterans' Administration Office, the VBO in Tiyan, if at the very least we would have, should this resolution be accepted and welcomed, we would have at least the Inspector General to conduct an assessment of all the services and the resources that are being made available for our veterans here on Guam and a number of our veterans who receive treatment from Guam who are either from CNMI or the Micronesia region. So if at the very least this proceeds and we get the cooperation of the Congresswoman and an investigation is conducted then at least the resources that are being made available to the community of Guam and the veterans community here in Guam as well as the Micronesian and Marianas region, then at least we can know and our veterans can acknowledge that in fact we're either getting the level of services that is being provided equally across the nation, or in this case with many of the challenges that some of our veterans experience, we perhaps are being shortchanged, and if in fact this investigation produces information that we may be shortchanged with the level of services, then at least it would reinforce many of the requests by our veteran community that in fact we get what are veterans have rightfully earned, and that is with the medical as well as with the benefits that they have earned by virtue of donning the uniform.

Chairman Aguon:

Aside from that I want to recognize Senator Mary Torres. Thank you very much Senator for joining us this evening, and Senator Tommy Morrison thank you for joining us. Aside from that, I think I've said enough with regards to the resolution and some of the additional information that I wanted to impart before we begin receiving testimony with this particular resolution. I would like to invite the following individuals to please join us up front: Mr. Tom Devlin, Mr. Leslie San Nicolas, Anthony Quenga, Daniel Perez, and Ricardo Cruz. Once again if I can invite the following individuals: Mr. Tom Devlin, Mr. Leslie San Nicolas, Anthony Quenga, Daniel Perez, and Ricardo Cruz. To the audience, because of the number of individuals who have signed up to provide testimony, I'm going to request that in fact our comments be limited to no more than 5 minutes. I believe that that would be ample time to express your concerns, and if by any chance you would like to close out on your presentation, I will allow you to after we go through the first round of individuals who have provided testimony. Mr. Devlin if you would like to please identify yourself for the record and please proceed with your testimony for Resolution 111-33.

Mr. Tom Devlin:

Good evening Senators. Good evening everyone, fellow veterans. My name is Tom Devlin. I am the producer of K57 VetTalk radio show, and I'm also, as of now, the Vice Commander of one of the Chapters of Military Purple Heart. I got called up here first. I didn't realize that I was going to be called up first. To be honest with you, I put my name sort of at the bottom to listen to what everyone else had to say, but since you called me up first, I agree with the resolution. Well, I have a lot of friends in a lot of places I guess, but I agree with the resolution. Before I say that, I've been in the VA system since 1969 when I came out of Vietnam. I personally have never had a problem with the VA system, with the medical end of it, with the GI benefits, educational benefits, home loan benefits, but when one veteran has a problem with the system, we all have a problem with the system, and I have seen the system improve on Guam. I'd say about 8 years ago and somehow the system has gone down in certain areas with the clinic. We had a meeting with the Congresswoman in her office, and a lot of words have been dallied about, about the expansion of the clinic. Well to find out that the expansion of the clinic is not a set deal, it's not a go. Guam is maybe 90th on a waiting list. That doesn't mean it won't happen, but that doesn't mean it will happen. So the idea is that if you expand the clinic and you don't have the amount of doctors for the clinic, why expand the clinic? There's also talk from different individuals about a Veterans Hospital. If the Veterans' Administration can't expand the clinic or can't get doctors on the island of Guam in a reasonable fashion, there's no way you're going to be able to see a Veterans Hospital. And where are the Veterans numbers are. Where are the numbers? We have a lot of fluctuation with numbers, but also when it comes to let's say, clinics and issues like that, I have something for the senators. Those senators that are here and those that are not here that I'd like to hand out, and this is basically a report, and it's a quarterly report of what goes on in the Veterans system: how sometimes doctors get arrested for drug use, how various employees do various things, and how veterans abuse the system; and I think it's time that, on Guam, we find out what's going on at CBOC: the good, the bad, what has to be improved, what has gone well. The Veterans have a right to know. The elected leaders on this island have a right to know, and our Congresswoman, in my opinion, has not done a very good job in the last few years with that, and I told that to her face, and a lot of those members that are on the council said the same thing in her office: that they felt that she wasn't doing what was necessary for the veterans on the island of Guam. It was a heated conversation. These veterans were not, let's say, ticked off. They were mad. They were mad because there are younger veterans out there that have served in Afghanistan. There are military people going back to Iraq as we speak. Millions of dollars are going to be spent all over again going back to Iraq that were supposedly trained 10 years ago, but when these individuals come back to this island or into the states, what do they get? Do they get the promises that they got when they enlisted? Many cases no.

Mr. Tom Devlin:

The Guam CBOC, they have a shortage of personnel. Are these doctors long-term doctors or temporary assignment doctors? If you had the nurses, that's fine, but a nurse can't give you an injection or prescriptions for you. You have to call Hawaii. I've called Hawaii to be told in Hawaii that you no longer have to call Hawaii. The doctor on Guam is notified automatically when you're prescription has to be refilled, but yet the Veterans are told they have to call a pharmacy in Hawaii, and they have to talk to a pharmacist. When the veterans call Hawaii, they don't talk to a pharmacist. They talk to a clerk because you can't get a pharmacist. They're too busy doing something else. So somehow we need somebody neutral to come to Guam and find out what is wrong with the system, how the system can be improved, and also if you go to the federal side, the Veterans website. There's a 90 page report. It's a quarterly report. I have it right here. I read it today. It tells you about how the Inspector General is inspecting a lot of hospitals and a lot of clinics. It's a quarterly report. Now I have been doing this for many, many years. I haven't seen Guam on any page, but I think it's time that elected leaders, especially representing the federal side, figure out why Guam seems to be exempt from a lot things. The choice program. Why wasn't Guam on the original choice program? Veterans are getting choice cards, but Guam wasn't on the choice program. Who on the federal side is responsible for this? Why wasn't Guam put on that choice program just like everyone else, the other 50 states? What happened? What's wrong? Where's the accountability here? The younger veterans, they're beyond mad. Someone has let them down, and it's up to the older veterans, the Vietnam veterans, the Korean War veterans to speak up for these young people. They serve. They constantly serve. They get activated. They get reactivated. It's almost like a circus, and they're coming from a small island, and when they get hurt, or when they sacrifice their lives, their lives are just as much valuable as the lives in the states, regardless of the color of their skin, regardless of the service that they served in. Were they drafted? Were they? It doesn't matter, but when they come here they figure they aren't getting the same deal. The veterans, when they're discharged from the United States Military, get unemployment insurance in the 50 states. Do they get unemployment insurance on Guam? No, but yet, every military member has unemployment insurance deducted from their salary. Where does that money go? What slush fund does it go into? Because on Guam, if you enlist in the military and you come back to Guam to live, you don't get unemployment insurance. It happened for National Guard troops, but only for six to seven hundred of them. But let's say myself, I enlist into the United States Navy for 5 years, and I come back and reside on Guam. I don't get unemployment insurance on Guam, but they deduct it out of my salary. There's something wrong with the system. There's something wrong. Our legal responsibility is to tell the senators, to tell the Congresswoman, and you got to scream and holler, and the veterans out here, they don't want to hear you don't have the money. They don't want to hear that. You can say you don't have the money. They're not listening to you anymore. There seems to be a lot of money going around when there needs to be. You can hear the hush in the room. Some of these veterans don't want to come up to this table. I've talked to many of them. They don't want to come up to the table and testify because they don't want their emotion to take control. So I wish you the best of luck, but I think you're going to have to get tough with yourselves and tough with the congresswoman to find out what's going on and be fair. Generally it's not the employees. The problem is the system. The system is letting the veterans down, and the only way we can change it is we have to go to elected leaders to fight the system. Thank you.

Chairman Aguon:

Thank you very much Mr. Devlin, and by virtue of your outreach program, K57 Veterans VetTalk, you certainly continue to provide much information to our veterans' community, and it's appreciated from this end. So thank you again Mr. Devlin. Mr. San Nicolas, if you can identify yourself for the record and please proceed.

Mr. Leslie San Nicolas:

My name is Leslie San Nicolas. I just got seen today at CBOC after trying to get an appointment for a while, and I saw Mr. William Marzullo. He came in from Fort Bliss, Texas, and I was telling him about how I hoped he stays longer than the last doctor I saw in February which I saw for about almost an hour, and he got all the details of my medical conditions, and then when I tried to do a follow up, he was gone in less than a month. I take pain narcotics for my back and my lower back, and they just prescribe the medication to me without seeing a doctor which is a no-no, but these sort of things happen, and someone has to sign it. For the last five months, I haven't seen a doctor, and they keep prescribing me my pain meds, and I don't have a problem. When I ask for something, they give it to me. The only problem we have is that I go in, and there's new nurses, yes there's new nurses, and last month there's only one doctor. So what's the use of having nurses if you don't have doctors? A lot of it has to do with how long these doctors are gonna stay. According to Dr. William Marzullo today, through our conversation, he said he signed a three year contract, and that's the only way for him to stay, to sign a three year contract. So, what about the other doctors? I don't know how many we have on board now, but I saw a couple today. I think they're doctors at CBOC, but my main concern is just having to follow up with the doctors after you've seen them, and they're not around again. Thank you.

Chairman Aguon:

Thank you very much Mr. San Nicolas for your testimony this evening. Mr. Quenga?

Mr. Anthony Quenga:

Hafa Adai yan Respetu Senators. My name is Anthony Damien Quenga. I wasn't actually expecting to be speaking, but here I am. You know I'm an optimist, and I believe that, as a former military officer in the United States Officer, we can gain by working together, and that's all we have to do. Senator Aguon you know as well as I do that the Inspector General investigation and things like that sometimes is much needed. We know that, and that keeps everybody in check, and that's what we want to do. We just want to work together. I believe in team work amongst everybody. You know here's the thing people. We're the higher primates right here in this room. We are the higher primates. So we too are catering to the veterans out there, and we also got to help each other. You know. I went through some things too recently, but you know what, we can't fight about it. We can't point fingers. You know what I'm saying? We have to work together. That's what I want to leave with everybody. Always remember, we are the higher primates, and let God do his work. Thank you.

Chairman Aguon:

Thank you very much Mr. Quenga. Mr. Perez?

Mr. Daniel Perez:

Good afternoon honorable senators. My name is Daniel Perez, Commander-President of the Barrigada Veteran's Organization, lifetime member of the Vietnam Veterans of America, lifetime member of Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1509, and a member of the Air Force Veterans Association. What I would like to say, it relates a lot to this public hearing, is that it's not mandatory and it's not an obligation for senators to attend public hearings. There's only five of you. The voters of Guam elected fifteen. It is not a standing rule like the bills on legislative sessions that there be excuse. It's really voluntary for senators to attend public hearings. If a senator is not present here, we can evaluate the integrity and the credibility of senators on every public hearing in the past, right now, and in the future. I came here freely and voluntarily to testify on Resolution 111-33 (COR). I am not in favor of this resolution. How did this committee arrive at allegations into access barriers adversely affecting the quality of primary and specialty care and mismanagement at Veterans Affairs CBOC. The word access's true meaning of admission, entrance, attack, and liberty to approach or means of approach. The word barrier's true meaning is a fence, obstruction, or any obstacle. Mismanagement, the true meaning of mis-, mis, meaning amiss, wrongly or makes compounds. Management's true meaning are carry on, conduct, succeed in doing, handle, and conduct affairs.

Mr. Daniel Perez:

None of these problems of access barriers or mismanagement existed at CBOC. I have personally experienced for several years the performances of outstanding, high quality, primary, and specialty health care services with Guam CBOC, Tripler Army Hospital, and Queens Hospital in Honolulu especially and extensively within the last four years: 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014, in accordance with U.S. Veteran's Affairs commitments. The serious concerns that we US Veterans on Guam that have used CBOC for so many years continue to speak up to US Veterans Affairs that the system problem needs to be addressed. Veterans Affairs Honolulu, the responsible management for CBOC Guam, is aware of these problems and has made a lot of improvements of better communications. The so frequent turnovers of doctors and nurses at CBOC has become a serious disappointment for veterans. A lot of these VA system deficiencies contribute to much lower salaries for doctors and nurses. For several years of advertisement on vacancies through the electronic procedures for recruitments of doctors and nurses does not offer any special attraction to fill these vacancies. Once vacancies are filled, the contract for doctors are just for a few months. I experienced that. Ten doctors in the period of three years. Ten different doctors. Once they leave, the availability of health care services are limited. It is not a mismanagement problem. Again, this is a system problem. Higher salary pay grades for Guam VA doctors needs to be addressed by the federal government. There are other options of solutions to this system problem, but it may not be economical for US Veterans Affairs including the disbursement of medicine to veterans. Extensive training to customer service at CBOC is a must. The assignment of a medical doctor to oversee the administration of CBOC is not the right thing to do. That is taking away the full time commitment of the doctor to perform extensive primary healthcare services to veterans. US Veterans Affairs needs to create and justify a position for an executive management administrator to oversee the entire operation with other duties and responsibilities. Again, this may not be economical for US Veterans Affairs, but it will certainly contribute to the improvement of the VA system problem. Si Yu'us Ma'ase.

Chairman Aguon:

Thank you very much Mr. Perez for your testimony this evening and also for highlighting some recommended considerations on the part of CBOC in terms of retaining medical physicians. Mr. Cruz?

Mr. Ricardo Cruz:

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman and committee members, senators, and veterans that are present here in the hall this evening. I thank you for being here this evening. I have not prepared a written statement to the issue. However, I agree with this resolution based on the fact that what we are talking about is here locally, not federally, and as the resolution states, we are asking higher ups to be involved without concern locally because locally we cannot, as is stated with the testimony provided by these gentlemen up here with me, it's obviously visual that we do have a problem, and we agree on that here locally. I'll make a long story short. On my case, I came back to the island in February, and I have tried to make an appointment with CBOC to see a mental, my mental, provider for follow up after not seeing the provider for a period of six months. I needed help. I needed urgent help. I recognize that personally, and it was not until thirty days later upon my request that I was granted an opportunity to visit with my mental provider. However, I stress that fact that I am a threat to the community, and that was when I was taken seriously. I know that I speak for a lot of veterans in that case, in that situation, I do know that. As if that our people are very reserved, are very proud, and they feel that they have served their country. It's the reason why they stand not to be noticed and not to be heard, but I for one cannot sit on my duff to let matters go locally. I strongly, I strongly endorse this resolution on the fact that I stand. I have two veteran sons that have served in Iraq and Iran, and I had photos, and I wish I had taken them with me this evening. One of my sons was photographed in Iraq with the Congresswoman, and I would have held that photo up and have you all witness that in fact it happened in Iraq underneath the tent where my son was having lunch with the congresswoman. I would have asked the audience what would that photo mean to you just looking at it.

Mr. Ricardo Cruz:

Mind you, it was taken in Iraq, but again the saying goes, if a picture paints a thousand words, I don't think you could come up with a dozen words to describe my feelings of that photograph. That photograph to me was taken for political reasons. Political reasons as was the former governor that visited Vietnam in my time. I did not see the former governor up in the DMZ where I was at. He visited soldiers down in the Southern part of Vietnam, not in the Demilitarized Zone. There was no media available up where I was at during Vietnam, and to see the Congresswoman standing with my son during war, fully dressed, pretty as she is. That's all I could see through the picture. Because up to this point, I am here tonight to push for the benefits that they earned also. Forget me. Forget me. I have just a few years more, more so, but my sons are in their mid-thirties. How long are they going to live? One of my sons has been in the front lines, down range is the army term, down range four times in four years. He has yet to see a mental provider, but I know that he suffers the same way I do. He's only proud, so proud. Though he's an army guy, he tries to emulate a marine father, mind you. He tries to emulate a marine, and it will never happen. I tend that the audience can agree with me just on a level of their experience and my experience. Gentlemen, please do not hold back to fight and to request and to urge the senators to push forward with this resolution because it is late. It is way overdue. Senators please push forward, and I will be here present if time that the Congresswoman would be in the same room with me in this hall, and I will make that photo available to ask her personally what was the intent or what was the purpose of that photograph taken during combat because nothing has been done to the veterans. Not so much. We can agree that we all heard hearsay about how many doctors and what the intermediate level of management is doing on our behalf. It is not middle management ladies and gentlemen. It is down in Congress. My pushback in 1996 with the late commander Jackson Missile on a town hall meeting held at Hilton 1996 was proposing to come up with a number of veterans that are in Guam. We suggested, the commander and I suggested, that elected officials go out to the villages, to their regions, sectors, or however you want to call it, to vie for the local votes. Same thing with the mayors as well, the governors. They all walked the path during election time to get votes. That was one suggestion. Each individual senator, as much as they can, tally up veterans in their community. The other was that the retired Brigadier General, Adjutant General for the National Guard, approached myself and three other command sergeant majors having breakfast in Kings one morning asking for a suggestion, our help, for how to possibly come up with a close proximity of the total number of veterans on Guam. We suggested that on weekend drills for the National Guard, he post or he task at least a platoon for each village to survey how many veterans are in the village. 1996 ladies and gentlemen. To this day we don't have numbers. The closest number we have are just maybe numbers that are actively serving for the national guard. Pathetic. Pathetic. I am sitting here with my counterparts on the table as well, veterans, wounded veterans, mind you in this room as well. We have lost close friends, relatives, brothers, parents. We have lost them in the war, but in my life, it's not going to happen with my sons because I will not allow for them to go through the same deal, the treatment that I am going through now. I imagine. I literally threatened CBOC to be seen for my condition. On the other side of the house, the primary care provider. I've seen my primary care provider once since then also. Only to find out last week that I am scheduled to see another replacement doctor by the name of Dr. Lei. I spoke with Dr. Lei today, and he told me that he'll only be here for about a few weeks. He cannot continue my treatment, be my care provider, because he is here temporarily as you have heard in the previous testimony provided. Totally and sad. Senators, Mr. Chairman, please. For our current member, veterans, Senator Ada, sir I salute you as well. You wore the uniform. You did wear it. We know your status. Please, be on the right hand of Senator Aguon and push forward. Senator Cruz, Morrison, and Senator Torres, please support Senator Aguon in his endeavor. Locally, we can do nothing as was said previously. That is why we need the Congresswoman. We need the governor as well ladies and gentlemen. More so, more so, we need numbers to show our strength. I invite all the veterans' organizations to come up and try to entice, invite their members, whenever we have veterans' issues to push forward. As statement on the mission of the Military Order of the Purple Heart is to support legislative initiatives for all veterans and families. That is the mission statement for the Military Order of the Purple Heart.

Mr. Ricardo Cruz:

Please, if anything, help us in our endeavor, in our mission to support legislative initiative. Thank you ladies and gentlemen. Senators, thank you very much.

Chairman Aguon:

Thank you very much Mr. Cruz for your testimony this evening and also sharing with us that this is endeavor that is continuing in nature. It's not only to address the services and the medical treatment and the benefits for our veterans today but also for our veterans who may need it after they retire. Thank you for sharing your perspective, and also to everyone on the panel, thank you very much for having serve our country in uniform. Senators, do you have any questions or comments? If not, I appreciate your testimony this evening. If I can invite the following individuals to please join us up front: Mr. Raymond Baza, Juan Finona, Alfred Zaragoza, I take it Mr. Stahl you are here observing? Okay. I'll have Mr. Don Dore. Observing. Beverly Dore. If I can invite those individuals: Raymond Baza, Juan Finona, Alfred Zaragoza, and Mr. Dan Mendiola. Mr. Baza, please if you can identify yourself for the record and proceed with your comments or testimony.

Mr. Raymond Baza:

Good afternoon Senators and Chairman. My name is Raymond T. Baza. I am the past Commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1509. I am here in support of the resolution that's going to be mentioned today, and I am also in support of that. Thank you.

Chairman Aguon:

Thank you very much Mr. Baza for your testimony this evening. Mr. Finona?

Mr. Juan Finona:

My name is Juan Finona. I am a disabled Vietnam Veteran. I am somewhat in favor with the bill, but not in favor of addressing the delegate of Congress, Madeleine Bordallo because I do not want to attend another town hall meeting. The purpose of your resolution and your bill senator is to approach the investigation as soon as possible and as truthfully and honest as possible. Now, we don't want to go back having a town hall meeting in order to pursue your bill. Alright? I have attended an abundance of town hall meetings from Madeleine Bordallo, and the promises she made, she only accomplished a quarter of all those promises. Okay? Time frame. Let me give you my example. I came back to Guam in June 2013. I requested to see a primary doctor on November 2013. I was called upon on February 2014. I met a doctor March 2014 for my thyroid. Now today I asked the lady for an annual physical. Look up my name at the computer and said "Mr. Finona, you just saw a doctor in March." I said okay. Is that my annual physical? She said yes. You mean to tell me that having blood work for my thyroid is my annual physical? "Yes, that's how we do annual physicals." I said "But what's going to happen to my lungs, my kidney, my liver, and my MRI for my lower back that I've been suffering from since I've been in Vietnam?" "Oh we don't do annual physicals like that. We only do blood work. That is the annual." So I'm due for next year, another blood work for my annual physical. Now I don't think that's an annual physical for a Veteran. Another thing, we just got back. I addressed the panel on December 2014 at the town hall meeting in Dededo pertaining CHAMPVA. Why do we have to pay 20% of the cost of dialysis, cancer treatment, etc. when back in California, VA Hospital, my wife is 100% covered. She is 100% covered. No copayment necessary for cancer, dialysis, medication, eyeglasses, etc. Why do I have to pay again for Medicare to cover the costs here on Guam? Where are those concerns? I approached Madeleine Bordallo office about this, and up to this day it hasn't gotten a response. So that's my personal identification of the delegate. I don't want to go to town hall meetings again for the purpose of this bill. I'm in favor of your bill, but I'm not in favor of having the Congresswoman again delay the process.

Chairman Aguon:

Si Yu'us Ma'ase Mr. Finona. Thank you very much for your testimony this evening. Mr. Alfred, please if I mispronounce your name, Zaragoza. Okay.

Mr. Alfred Zaragoza:

Hello. My name is Alfred Zaragoza. The senator has pronounced it right and good afternoon senators and the members of the veterans and guests. I did not expect to be on this table today. I just wanted to listen, but I have listened to a lot of facts about the CBOC. I myself had experienced difficulties on CBOC. I am a disabled veteran with heart problems. I have to see a cardio doctor or heart doctor every six months because I have an implant that they have to evaluate six months all the time. In the process of investigating my implants, the doctors needed an echocardiogram. About July last year, I have seen a newly replaced doctor and she had said that she will assign me a doctor to give me a echocardiogram, and they said just wait. They'll call you. I had been waiting and waiting until it was time for me to see my evaluation of my implants which is defibrillator, heart defibrillator. So I seen that doctor evaluate my heart defibrillator. She said it's okay at this time, but next time I see you I need your echocardiogram to fully evaluate my condition. At that time, it's time for me to see again my doctor which is she wants me to see her only every six months. I see the same doctor on February, and I told her I have not had the cardiogram that you had promised to schedule me for. so, I did that, but nobody had called me. I told her. She said okay. I'll reschedule you again. Up until now, that was since February, up until now I don't have nobody calling me for a cardiogram. My wife has been busy calling places to see if anybody had requested an echocardiogram for me, but nobody said they have any. I agree with the resolution, and this is just enforce the problem that I have heard on this room earlier, and will also help me find out what is the problem in the CBOC. Why can't I get the echocardiogram? Thank you very much senators.

Chairman Aguon:

Thank you Mr. Zaragoza for joining us this evening and presenting your testimony. Mr. Mendiola?

Mr. Dan Mendiola:

Thank you Mr. Chairman. Good evening ladies and gentlemen, Senator Aguon, Senator Ada, rest of the other senators, fellow veterans. I was kind of quite a surprise to be up here talking to a bunch of people. One thing for sure, it looks like we are a handful here tonight, which is always the desired outcome for the hearing. How many times do we veterans, do we in our free time will look at the TV and say well, lets see how many Senators were present for the veterans hearing and as somebody said earlier, there are five Senators tonight and although there is none withstanding order to have all Senator here tonight. We can certainly see the interest of the senators that are here tonight. To say that I am with the investigation or in favor of that, not entirely. I think it is a good idea, but we have to all think what we are doing here, when we are requesting for a top level investigation. Non commission officers, sergeant majors, captains, officers that are in charge, while you were in the military, we were taught one thing. If we have a problem, we are going to take care of it before it gets higher up. I don't want to send a message all the way up to Washington D.C. and then for people to come here and look at the problem, what we've got, and they are going to say, look at all the people around you that could've done something. I had a VBA meeting the other day, and I just kind of asked, how many of you guys, how many of my members have a problem with the pharmacy online calling in? Five of them raised their hands. There was about forty people in the meeting, but irregardless, again like somebody said here, if there is one veteran that's complaining then we do have a problem. How we do tackle that problem is up to the leaders. For example, I am the President of the Vietnam Veterans of America. For me to say that I need to move forward to address this problem up to the highest level is not inconsistent with my leadership ability.

Mr. Dan Mendiola:

What I am taught is that I need to get those five people, and I need to sit them down, and I need to talk to them. What happened? It could be, just the matter of the way they were dialing the numbers. They could be shaking. You know veterans. Sometimes they get the shakes. And on top of that, I am with the Naval Hospital System. Sometimes I punched the wrong number. At the end of the line will tell me I am sorry, you ain't got no more refills and I said dag gone it I got two more left, well what happen was I punched in the wrong number. Okay, so is that a problem of the higher up? No its not. We have to look at ourselves when we say we have a problem and what we are trying to tell the world what is the problem. I don't want the world to look down on us and say they don't know what they're doing. They don't even know how to punch in a number on the telephone. That's why they are not getting what they need, but for all practical purposes we do have a problem here. But I'd like to call on all the leaders, all the presidents of the organization, to take care of your people. Be one to one on them on some of their problems and when we do that what happens is we mitigate some of the problems that's going to be generated later on for us to change the online pharmacy procedure. I don't know if that's going to help my five people. If they change that system, they are going to mess up the rest of them, 35 of them. So we have to be very careful when we demand changes because the very change that you are asking could befall the 35 out of the 40 that are saying hey this system is okay. Now veterans count. That's another problem that we have and we've been hammering this veterans count since day one. Truth to the matter is we have three particular population counts out there. We have 27,000 we have 8000 and we have 2800 or three or 3000. Which one counts towards getting a better medical facility here in Guam and or a bigger clinic or leading up to a hospital. Which one of the higher one up of the congress people looking at, which counter is the one that counts. According to some of the administrators that I have talked to, the 2800 veterans count that are using the CBOC equates to the seven or 8000 number that we have and they are being utilized accordingly on a percentage matter because when you look when they have made a survey in the states that throughout the country in any region 30 to 32% of the population utilizes CBOC or the medical facility out of a veterans count. So to me that seems to be working. Maybe our problem is a procedure. Like some of the veterans mentioned here we were left out. We were left out, but we were always covered with being others whenever they come out with something. It's a matter of regulation and procedure. You know we get to be like Alaska all the way out there and for some reason they just don't take it seriously to set a procedure for Guam. They bundled us up with the rest of the folks in the states that are out somewhere. So they are working because it affects the choice card and again that's another thing about the choice card. Veterans just can't go out there and see a doctor. We all got to face. It's money is what really is driving everything. If you go and see a doctor and that doctor is not certified or part of the VA system you're going to end up paying and it's not VA's fault. That is why we have to go through the CBOC because then they direct you to where you should go so you won't have any problems. Okay. I think I've taken my five minutes up. I know that I'm probably not too popular with the rest of my veterans, but I just thought I want to put that in. Thank you very much for your time. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to be here tonight.

Chairman Aguon:

Chairman Aguon: Thank you very much Mr. Mendiola and gentlemen thank you very much for your service to our country and to our island community. Senators any questions for the panel members?

Chairman Aguon:

If not thank you again gentlemen. I'm going to call the individuals who have signed in and if by any chance you're not going to present oral testimony then by all means just disregard that please because I know perhaps a few of you in the audience have signed in and have no intentions in providing oral testimony. We have Rob San Agustin, Fernando Esteves, Enrique Agustin, Jimmy Pangelinan, and Mr. Bill Cundiff and Marlene Slomka. Like I said, if your desire is not to provide oral testimony then by all means I acknowledge that. Once again Rob San Agustin, Fernando Esteves, Enrique Agustin, Jimmy Pangelinan, Bill Cundiff, and Marlene Slomka. Okay Mr. Esteves, I take it you're first.

Mr. Fernando Esteves:

Honorable senators and fellow veterans, Fernando Esteves veteran of Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. I'm of that new generation that the older veterans and my forerunners speak about. I moved back home in 2014 and since being home, I was surprised that I have run in to six Chamorro Guamanians that I had served in my tenure in the army, which was surprising that they moved home, and it really brought to life the issues of regarding benefits, primarily medical that the veterans of the past and of the future are going to be facing. I do recall I think the last statistic was one out of every eight people on Guam enlist in the military whether National Guard or active-duty across the branches. That's a large issue. I mean speaking of that is not so much an issue with the veterans themselves, it's an issue with the public because one of out of every eight is touching every single family, you know throughout the community on the island. In terms of the resolution I do agree with it, but like the gentleman said prior to, we do need to look within. Every veteran here you know who served in the executive branch and knows the hard fight and red tape of the bureaucracy with the federal government, and if we don't have an accurate count then we are going to be dead in the water and we're not going to look very professional, and they may not take us serious in the future. So until we have all our ducks in a row, I would say hold. Take a tactical pause look at the situation. I've heard there had been talks about this. For a long time you know there's different numbers. They have this count. They have this count. Who's responsible for cross-referencing different accounts? You know if we're going out reach to the veteran communities to capture numbers whose cross-referencing that? Have people been counted twice? Have people passed away? The government has so many systems in place to register people for anything, whether it's a vote at the village mayor's office for anything. How much is it going to cost to ask to check the block, are you a veteran? How much is it going to cost for a village mayor to send somebody to somebody's house and perhaps pick up a copy of the schedule member for DD214 or cross-reference it on public knowledge. These are all systems that are already in place that just take somebody to sit down and do. Somebody asked me to volunteer an hour a day to cross-reference veterans I'd do it gladly. I don't think it's difficult. I don't think it's costly, but I think in finding that fundamental number that's going to get asked over and over again by the feds, we need to establish that before we move forward with anything because even if they did find any problems how are they going to even establish funding or determine the funding to fix them. They are one big pocket but they're very tight in how they show that money, and if we can't provide any kind of number, we are just not going to be taken seriously. We are all professionals in our service with the military. The legislature, the executive branch, the government as a whole in my 10 years of being or 11 years of being away has moved into a very professional organization I could be proud to call my local government. I think putting any kind of legislature forward or resolution we need to make sure we have all our information correct before we put ourselves like the gentleman before, in the limelight right in front of the federal government. Thank you very much.

Chairman Aguon:

Thank you very much Mr. Esteves. Mr. Agustin?

Mr. Enrique Agustin:

Thank you senators, fellow veterans. I am Enrique Agustin, a combat veteran of the Vietnam War. Our mission in the infantry is to close with and destroy the enemy. I am not proud to say that killing another human being in the name of political ideologies is justifiable. I was only a teenager when this life-altering event took place, and it has haunted me for the last 50 years. For those of us who suffers from PTSD, who have loved ones with PTSD who committed suicide because of the lack of adequate care is a terrible thing. I have relatives and friends who have died as a result of their war experience. As a community with a high percentage of veterans, we have not done enough to take care of the veterans and their families. What we have done enough is to complain and continue to complain and now move our complains to the next higher level by going the route of addressing our concerns with the Veterans Administration's Inspector General. Does complaining accomplish anything? Are we just complaining in general or do we have specific issues that has been collected and separated into categories to ensure that when the Inspector General team come to Guam that we have a hone in on the real issues facing our community. Do we have the right head count of the number of veterans living on Guam? Why do other territories like Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands have their numbers correctly and identified at the VA? Why is Guam different? Is the amount of VA money allocated to the various states and territories is based on headcount, then why doesn't Guam have that data by now? For many years the veterans administration have paid consulting firms to come up with data for each state and territory. Do we have to hire a consultant? Do we have the money locally to adequately conduct a survey to assess the right headcount? Is the veteran commission, Guam Veteran Commission adequately funded by our local government to conduct such a study? Why is the Guam Veteran Commission responsible for the conduct of this survey and where is the money to take care of the cause of this survey? As member of the House Armed Services Committee, will our Congressional Delegate demand that Veterans Administration provide Guam with the most updated data on the number of veterans residing in Guam? Can she require that the defense finance and accounting services, DFAS, provide some data? Can she require that the Veteran Hospital Administration, VHA, provide some data? Can she require that the Veteran Benefit Administration provide some data? This is where we can collect all of this data and we can cross-reference. How can a civilian aide to the Secretary of the Army help us with the issues we have as a community. Yes. We do have a Guam civilian aide to the Secretary of the Army. Do you know that the veterans are the best military recruiters for our nation? Veterans directly influence our young men and women whether to join the military or not. What you think happen when the veterans tell the younger generation not to join because they have been mistreated. What happen our country then? The civilian aide in this community need to stand up and tell the higher ups that hey, we are going to have a recruiting issue here if we don't take care of the veterans on Guam. When we are able to get the data we need from the various sources mentioned above, can we not done making logical assessment of the number of veterans living on Guam and then have that data vetted by the Veterans Administration so we can get our fair share of funding for veteran community. When we have these numbers, then we can see our fair share of resources put to bear on the problems and challenges we have as a community or are we just going to complain without first correctly identifying the cause of the problem and not merely addressing the symptoms. We can do better. As currently written I do not support the resolution being presented here today.

Mr. Enrique Agustin:

We need to be more specific as to the problem we are encountering before I support the resolution. For the record I have not had any access issue. I have not any medical issue with my treatment at CBOC and have been using CBOC for the longest time thank you.

Chairman Aguon: Thank you very much Mr. Agustin for your testimony this evening. Mr. Pangelinan.

Mr. Pangelinan: Good evening senators and fellow veterans. I didn't prepare a speech, but just at the top my head listening to the other veterans speak. A big concern on Guam I believe right now is that a lot of our soldiers coming back from the Afghanistan and the new war going on is mental care. A lot of our soldiers suffered trauma and in order for you to receive trauma care on Guam we have I think two psychiatrists up there at CBOC. A couple of them over at the Veterans Center, but for the guys with really intense trauma issues, they don't have the service on Guam, which is like the PRP in Honolulu. I strongly suggest senators that we look into bringing a PRP to Guam for the soldiers that one, can't afford the off island trip even though some of them, anyone above 30% I believe, the luxury of going back to Hawaii if they are recommended, but if they are not recommended and you have less than 20%, you're going to have to pay it out of your pocket. Once again leaving your family, your bills everything behind. Your family might suffer. No food. Stuff like that and then another thing about CBOC. CBOC don't get me wrong have helped us out a lot, but on the same token they have failed us. There is an overload up at CBOC. A lot of the younger generation soldiers that don't have employment, that really have to depend on CBOC it won't work for them. There's no way it can work for them. I am a working soldier. I came from Operation Shield and Storm. I work in the government so I can afford an outside insurance plus CBOC. What about the soldiers that are coming home? The guys that are unemployed. Their only employment is to be deployed and when they come home they have nothing. Where are those soldiers? Where their futures? Where is VA when they need them? We need them now. Those kinds of people that come back from deployment that are unemployed need VA services now. Not six months down the road. Not three months down the road. They need it right away when they come back. So everyone here might disagree or agree but from personal stats, I strongly suggest that we address the issues of our younger soldiers. There's 18, 19, 20 year olds that can't even adapt to civilian life. We need to take care of our younger soldiers. I mean I'm not that old, but I'm not that young either. So please lets address what's in front of us right now and what's in front of us is the unemployment of the soldier that that just come back from deployment and they really need mental health care. Another thing, not all of the veteran services on Guam are bad. Veteran's Affairs personally is, you can walk in there without an appointment and they will see you if they have to. CBOC sometimes if you're walk in and you really tell them they do have time, but they don't have enough people to take care of the veterans on Guam and that's all I have to say thank you.

Chairman Aguon: Thank you very much Mr. Pangelinan for your testimony this evening. Mr. Cundiff.

Mr. Bill Cundiff:

Thank you for allowing me to testify this evening. My name is Bill Cundiff and I'm the chairman of the Guam Veterans Commission. Before I go any further, I want to thank all the folks, the federal folks who are here this evening. They've done a fantastic job with the resources that they have. They have been doing a fantastic job. I don't know of any veteran that has been denied of any service.

Mr. Bill Cundiff:

If you have been denied of any service, come see me. We'll fix that right away. But I don't think so. I doubt it very seriously. I recently came back from Honolulu. Based on the letter that I wrote to the secretary of the VA, it generated the response that I wanted and I tell you: it was the best trip that I ever made. But before I go any further on my trip, I would say I don't agree with this resolution at all. Call this public hearing tonight, to me, and please don't feel offended, is demagoguery. Fully demagoguery. Why do I say that? This proof positive, bringing us here is proof positive that we don't have the handle on how to resolve problems. Just like the issue of not having a handle on having the number of veterans. The data, we don't have it. We don't have those data for decades. Now, we're calling the veterans here to come to testify on the issues we're having yet we don't have a handle on how we can resolve these things. None! Tell me what you've done to resolve this issue in a centralized fashion. I don't think there's any. And I think it's unfair to bring the veterans here to do their emotions or whatever it may take so that they can testify for or against this issue. It's a demagoguery fashion of doing things. We have to have procedures, process, and all those good things when our veterans complain. We don't have that, but the veterans commission have been doing a lot of those things since I took over. We have been centralizing a lot of those issues. I really think some folks are eluded to the fact that when we bring this up to the federal folks, it'll be an embarrassment because we don't have a process to ensure that we get all those problems together, that we look at trends and then we can bring these things together and resolve it perhaps at our own level. Barriers? What barriers? To access care? Tell me if anybody here has been denied access to CBOC. There are procedural problems, but they don't have any access. A lot of people say that we have mismanagement problems. Now, how do you know what procedures do they have that you know that are not being followed that we can say those are management problems? I don't think we do have that. Unless you work out there and look at the procedure and the issues, whatever they're doing and compare it to what is not happening. I don't think we have that at all. Going and meeting the folks at Honolulu, like I said in the beginning, was a result of the letter I wrote to the secretary. It generated the response that I wanted. They asked me to sit down with them, to call them to tell them what the issues are. Well, I didn't do that. I went and paid on my own to go see them. That's how much I care about these things. What happened during our meeting is this. We forge a sincere partnership and that is the missing link. We forge now a sincere partnership with Mr. Pfeiffer and all his leadership team. Very very sincere partnership. We now have a direct line of communication to him to look at issues, tell him the concerns and he can resolve on the spot if he can. If not, it'll probably take time, but we have the direct line of communication to him now. We have enhanced a better relationship on collaboration with those leadership. That has been missing! It's all bang, bang, bang! We need to collaborate with them and talk to them in a conversational fashion so that we can resolve issues. That was the missing link is: they don't understand the purpose of the commission. When they come here most of the time, they go to the leadership but never come to the commission. I don't know why that is. Commission is not in the loop for being provided with information. When they come here on trips, we don't get any information at the commission. Nothing. There is not opportunity to design a centralized system to fix problems. None! Zero! So what happens? We keep going and complaining about "Oh, cancel stuff!" without sending down and collaborating, finding ways to work together. This has been the problem. So, I approached with an idea and agreed on it.

Mr. Bill Cundiff:

The idea is to sit down with all his people here, CBOC, only the leaders of CBOC, the benefits office, the veterans center and all the programs manager of the different federal VA programs, the veterans commission folks, the veterans affairs office, the commission member and other folks so they can sit down on a courtly basis and bring all these issues together, work it out at our level and things we cannot resolve, we can move it up to him. He bought that off. That has been solely needed for the longest time. A lot of people say the VA folks in Hawai'i don't care, let me tell you: they care a lot. Let me tell you what they've done. What Mr. Tommy Drisco did recently. We all talk about choice cards that went on a radar scope. We all, we have been in a radar scope, but when that program launched nationwide; there was a lot of issues. But let me tell you what Drisco did. He was so good that he was asked to go to Washington to help out. So, what he did for us, for Guam, CNMI, Virgin Islands and those guys and couple other states is this. In order for you to be eligible for a choice card, two things gotta happen first: you gotta be registered on the system on August 2014 and before or if you're registered, you are a combat vet within 5 years of retirement or 5 year of just got out of the military. Good thing about what he did was he put us in a different category. We don't have to wait for 30 days. We don't have to wait for 20 days. We don't have to wait. As long as we meet the LB portion and then that part of and we automatically meet that particles. We don't have a VA hospital here. We can go to those folks and the providers and do whatever it takes to get our appointments. However, right now, there are system problems but when those system problems are fixed, we won't have any problems at all. And guess what? There are a hundred and sixty-seven providers between Guam and CNMI. That's amazing. And you know why they have 167 providers from Guam and CNMI? Because the VA will pay them at the highest level so they can serve our folks. When that program works, there probably is no need for CBOC quite frankly. All the people won't be going to CBOC because now, they have this opportunity to make a phone call, go straight to the provider and we're done. I made a suggestion to them this morning to recommend to the veterans to just go straight to the provider, get their appointment if the veteran is in the system and has been registered. Just go there and do your thing. And then they can take care of each other later on as far as billing is concerned. They'll look into that suggestion and hope it would be approved that way there would be no verocacy when our guys and gals go use their quest card. Or their. I'm sorry about that. Their. What was that? Choice card. Let me tell you what are the good stuff. I'm sorry. I know I have one. Anyway, let me tell you the good stuff that came out of that meeting. We've been pushing for over 2 years to have VA over at Honolulu partner with the new hospital. That's gonna happen. They're negotiating the partnership with the new hospital. When that happens, guess what may happen? We may limit our guys and gals going to Honolulu. If the CBOC has shortage of doctors, they probably can go there and get help. So that is a good thing that's going to happen. We talked about retention of doctors. That was a big issue. What they've done recently was add one more doctor to CBOC. One more doctor to CBOC. They have backups at Honolulu right now. They're working on pay incentives to ensure they stay. And then I broach the idea of them going and trying to get commissary and be a privileged for them. But according to DOD, that cannot happen. But I brought that issue up to the Lieutenant Governor today and he made a phone immediately to the admiral but she wasn't in. But I'm requesting for the administration to work with them and at least give them passes to go into the VX Commissary and go get gas. That perhaps may help the retention issue. One of the things we don't have was that a briefing out of CBOC for folks going to Honolulu. I wrote that checklist as soon as I came home and I gave it to Mr. Pfeiffer and he liked it.

Mr. Bill Cundiff:

So, now, they're fine-tuning it to make sure that when our guys and gals go to Honolulu, they're gonna get that briefing. I also broached the idea of CBOC making a handbook of services for our veterans when they go there. They're gonna do that because they don't have that right now. So when our veterans get seen over there, they'll give them, hopefully, a book of services, all the processes, all the phone numbers, all of these things so they won't have. Perhaps, it's gonna help them out. Patient advocate, we now have a Liaison patient advocate of CBOC and then, Honolulu just added another patient advocate to handle our concerns. Here's another thing, if we centralized all this issues and we work together and bring it out, a lot of times, it can be resolved. He also likes the idea of and he is also willing to pay overtime, that's Mr. Pfeiffer, to help the Guam Veterans Commission with our program to go out and help register veterans into the system to go out into villages and do whatever it takes. He likes the idea and he's willing to pay overtime to get that done. I broach the idea about champ VA. Champ VA belongs to the navy. They've tried to help bring the program back but they can't. We have to approach the navy to see if we can get that done here or bring it back again. That was taken about 2 years ago when the director left. The other thing we requested and we got is we know, I've been looking around, I've been listening, a lot of our veterans are having issues with filling out their application for benefits. Also, there's a new thing called "fully-developed claim." So what Mr. Thompson is doing is making up a training DVD so we can take the DVD and put it on YouTube or take it to the veterans out there or run duplicates and give it to our veterans organization so they can run those training programs for our folks. They are helping us on that one. I also asked them to give us the process, give us the procedures or when a veteran passes away it Tripler. So they are giving us the process and procedures and so on. And we are attaching that to the checklist before they leave to Tripler so they can understand how the process work. These are just brief things that I broached with those folks in Honolulu. I'm going to tell you one thing: they really care about our veterans here. We have to centralized our issues. We have to develop a system where we can bring these things together, look for trends and then, work the problems at a local level with this quarterly meeting that we're gonna have and if we cannot fix those problems, you're only a phone call away from me or Mr. Chairman at the Madeleine's counsel, we can just mix some phone calls perhaps and get some of those issues resolved. I don't agree with what we're trying to do. We need to sit down, fine-tune the system. A lot of my troops, we were in the military, the first we said like Mr. Dan said, when you have a problem, work it at the lowest level. If it cannot be resolved, move it up to the imminent level. If that cannot be resolved, then go to the IG or right to your congress person and get an investigation done. Thank you for your time.

Chairman Aguon:

Thank you very much, Mr. Cundiff. Ms. Slomka.

Ms. Marlene Slomka:

Good evening, Senators. I'm Marlene Slomka. I was not prepared to testify tonight, but listening to all my fellow veterans speak on their behalf as a veteran themselves, I wanna speak as a Marlene Slomka, veteran 26 and a half years. I disagree with requesting for an IG and primarily because while in service as my fellow veterans have, we've been through a lot of IG processes and all of that and you don't just go all the way up to address the issues Mr. Cundiff was talking about and also, I'm a VA success story and I make that no secret to everybody.

Ms. Marlene Slomka:

So, prior to retirement, a lot of, I mean the VA launch a lot of programs and I raised my hand. I said "May I please kindly be your guinea pig. Just tell me what to do, give me the checklist and I will follow them religiously." And I have. One of the things that I did, my claim was a fully developed claim and I didn't. In 2012 before I retired, they launched 2 programs, which was 180 days out before retirement or 45 days out, but because there was a you know. We missed a. There was some kind of miscommunication so I missed the 180 days out, but when I was doing my out-processing in Hawai'i, that's Spark Matsunaga, and the VA folks, I mean all of them, they're like "You know what, Marlene. We have another program. It's called BDD (Benefits Delivered Upon Discharge) and that's 45 days out and I'm like "Oh okay. What do I have to do?" And then they walked me through all my paperwork, the whole thing so I was of the system by 1 July only because I missed the 180 days out. I got my disability pension 1 August. I was given a window of one year to provide substantiating documents to do the claim. They said, "Well, your shoulder because we only have an X-ray, we didn't do the MRI so you have one year to do that, but I got 70% disability, and I was so afraid that if I put in all the documents that I have that they were gonna tell me that "you know you can't work" because I'm a work-a-holic so I just sort of put that. And I just devoted myself to helping my fellow veterans and I wanted to tell my story of how they helped me and they have. And, as a matter of fact, for my senior veterans, Vietnam vets, I really salute you. Thank you because you spoke up that's why I'm getting it better today. So I found. Or actually, more like Mr. Quidachay found me and I didn't even know that my company, being a woman on service disabled was in a VA pamphlet so he found me. So he asked me "would you kindly help me give me a price quotation to convert my home to make it ADA compliant. I said, "gladly." So then I didn't realize it's a grant. It's called a his. I can't remember what the acronym stands for right now. So the purpose of the grant is to convert a veteran home and make it ADA compliant. So then he said, "Well you know I don't have any money. You know I only have. The budget is only \$6800." I said "Oh, don't worry about it." I mean in 2013 when he found me. And then we worked through it by early part of this year only because it was the old system and I was always giving feedback to Mr. Waaa. I mean to Mr. Greg Oswel their office, how it was working. So I said "how can you help me make this process go longer because when I first met Mr. Quidachay, he was still walking, but now, he's on a cane." So I would just go there and do that. So finally, I finished the project when Mr. Aaron Williams, the team chief for the grant and Ms. Rozaldo, she's also one of the team chief of one of the grants, they came. The first thing they asked me "how much money did you lose on this project?" I'm like, "okay, well, you know. The project, the scope that Mr. Quidachay wanted, but because it is what I needed to do so that he can get around properly, it's \$17,000. But he goes, "do you know you're only getting paid \$6800?" I said "Yes!" I said, I mean my husband will tell me this. I'm not a business woman because I don't compute that. So he goes, "Well, what is your plan to help fellow veterans?" I said, "Well, we actually stood up a foundation.

Ms. Marlene Slomka:

It's a nonprofit arm because as for profit, I cannot receive donations and there are others out there who wants to help so at least they could get the tax benefit and because of that, I've been working very closely with Mr. Aaron Williams and Ms. Rozaldo and Ms. Rosaldo asked me "Would you build a home for a veteran for \$68,000?" And I said "Yes." And he goes, "How do you plan to do that?" I said, "I don't know yet, but I'm pretty sure that when the word is out. I mean if there's a will, there's a way." That's just like with the grant. I'm working right now with 2 other fellow veterans, senior veterans. No, I'm sorry. One of them is actually a veteran out of Iraqi-Afghanistan, my fellow member. He's an amputee. But at first, I was kinda apprehensive about coming here. Well, do I say I support or I don't support. But you know what I'm gonna say I don't support it because I see a lot of things that we're doing on the side and since I started coming to the Guam Vet since 2013, I have seen so much improvement in how, what I thought, and I went through this myself when I first retired, having been in uniform, we were trained to have structure. When I retired, I tell you, I was lost. I was lost. I'm like, "okay, I don't have to wake up at 0430, no PT and everything." And then I was thinking, I'm like "wow!" I sort of sat back and observe. But when I saw what Mr. Cundiff was doing, coordinating with GVAO and at the time, Mr. Umpingco was the GVAC chair so I watched all of that. With their very limited resources, they actually accomplished a lot. And also to address the question earlier by one of our fellow veterans, "How do you react to that picture when I show you a picture of my son with a congresswoman?" Well, I will tell you. In 1989, I'm the first female soldier of the year for the Guam Army National Guard, just an E4. I didn't even know. I thought for sure I was in trouble because I was being summoned to the legislature. I didn't really realize that Senator Madeleine Bordallo wrote a legislative resolution to recognize my accomplishment. I didn't even know. I'm like "wow, she sees me!" You know I'm a nobody and she sees me. For me, when I see my congresswoman put her life to danger in the face of danger to come see our troops. You know what, I would dust off the ground and kiss the ground that she walks on her life on danger to come see me. That my reaction. Again, I speak for myself. Sometimes, when my fellow veterans says I can speak for. I cannot do that. For the VA right now, we're actually collaboration with the Guam Trade Academy in a reference to your concern about our young generation of veterans about not having employment after. Deployment is the only way of being employed. I was part of the program launched by the Governor's office. It's called "Keeping Your Guard Up Initiative." Before our troops touched their boots on the ground, we worked closely with GCC, Guam Trades Academy and there were some training programs. Now, our team is collaboration with the Guam Trades Academy. Their program is already approved by the VA. We're also communicating with Mr. Pfeiffer. They have a program called "Compensated Work Therapy," whereas working is part of the veterans' therapy. Okay, my 5 minutes is up. Sorry.

Chairman Aguon:

Thank you, Ms. Slomka. I appreciate your testimony this evening. Any questions for anyone in the panel? Senators? If not, thank you very much fellow veterans for your service. If I can invite the following individuals: Mr. Rodney Cruz, Dan Munoz, Ryan Mendiola, Peter Sgro and Roland Ada. Once again, Rodney Cruz, Dan Munoz, Ryan Mendiola, Peter Sgro and Roland Ada. And then we have one final panel of individuals to provide a testimony. I see two have joined us so I'm gonna go ahead and call up a few other individuals: Mr. John Quidachay, Henry . I apologize. Mancoer? If I can invite Henry Mancoer and Joanne Manglona. If you're in the audience and you don't have any intentions of providing oral testimony, I wanna continue down the lists: Jaycee Moore, Edward Chang and Fred Blas.

Chairman Aguon:

Once again, if I can invite Henry, Joanne, Jaycee Moore, Edward Chang and Fred Blas, please to join us up front. And Mr. Tony Perez? Is there a Tony Perez in the audience? If he would like to provide a testimony, he's more than welcome to join us up front. Okay, then you're good. You're good, Mr. Perez. Like I said, if your preference is not to provide oral testimony, then we're good on that. Okay, Mr. Cruz. Please identify yourself for the record and proceed.

Mr. Rodney Cruz:

Hafa Adai and good evening, senators. Senator Cruz, Senator Morrison, Senator Ada, Senator Blas. My name is Rodney Cruz, Jr. I'm the founder and president of the Iraq-Afghanistan and Persian Gulf Veterans. Tonight, I'll be testifying on behalf of my organization, who are made up of 600 plus members, mostly from the guard and reserves of the Guam Army and Air Guard. I want to thank this time first to thank you for recognizing my testimony and my written testimony.

[Written testimony attached.]

Chairman Aguon:

Thank you very much, Mr. Cruz, for your testimony this evening. Sir, if you can identify yourself and proceed.

Mr. Ryan Mendiola:

Ryan Mendiola. I didn't prepare no speech or anything. I'm just here to give testimony on my personal experiences. Guam Vet Center, CBOC. I got things that are goods and that are bads. Personally, I've experienced positive things at the Guam Vet Center when I needed something or somebody to talk to. CBOC, divided into two houses: the mental health side and the medical side. The mental health side has been good with me, but when we talk about the medical side of the house, that's where I have the issue. There have been times when I call and after waiting 5 minutes of listening to people talk about the thing about suicide and referring hotlines, I leave a message. This has happened more than once, numerous times. I would leave messages saying, "I need to see a doctor." I would wait 2 to 3 days, a week. Then, I call back. I would go into the clinic, "Please, did you guys get my messages?" "No, we don't know what you're talking about." Implying that I don't know what I'm doing. Now, I know I call and I leave messages. I don't know if that's a procedure issue or is it something that needs to be looked at. Another thing is the turn around point. The turn around resource for doctors. It's about frustrating for a lot of us to even reach out, veterans to even leave the house and go to this clinic and to find put your doctor change again on you. Now, you gotta start all over again with another person and try to build that rapport again so they can be familiar with you and your challenges. I keep hearing that "things are gonna happen", "things are gonna happen", "no, this is in the works" Well, you know what, I don't know how long it's gonna take because you know we all know that saying "talk is cheap." How many more years are we gonna wait? It's gonna happen in a year again? We heard that 10 years ago. The thing is that we need to have doctors that are there. We need doctors that are familiar with you. Instead of you starting all over again or instead of you saying "Ohh, I'm from Dr. So-and-So." "Oh, he left." They also need to look at. Those guys need help, too. Some of those doctors, they actually look like they need doctors themselves. That's how some of them looked. Burned out. I know one person in mind. And as far as the size of the clinic, as far as the adequacy for a lot of people that has served, especially with these wars coming up, these wars now, and probably, obviously, there will be more in the future, it's not consistent.

Mr. Ryan Mendiola:

They're packed in there like sardines and sometimes, they can't even figure out where are they going to put us. That kinda discourages you for coming out in the first place and asking for help because a lot of times when we come home, I tell you this: we just rather be left alone. I don't wanna bother nobody. And it doesn't help when you get that kinda experiences. Thank you.

Chairman Aguon:

Thank you very much, Mr. Mendiola, for your testimony this evening.

Ms. Juliet Moore:

Hi, my name is Juliet Moore, wife of the late Sgt. Paul Moore, who was deployed to Operation Enduring Freedom Afghanistan. I'm here today to testify that my husband died due to medical delays and treatments from the VA clinics and hospitals. For over 2 years, we have been seeking help and it shouldn't have taken over 2 years to find a facility for medical treatment for my husband. A month prior to his death, he had a physical done with the new physician who replaced his primary care physician Dr. Hisel. After the physical, you would have to wonder what type of physical he received because a month later, he died. And you have to wonder if his death would have been prevented. Recently, I have followed up with my husband's medical records off-island only to find out that my medical records request was never received from the CBOC clinic to Hawai'i. And I requested May 11th. I spoke to Jamie from Hawai'i. I asked her, "did you received my husband's medical record request?" She said, "no." Later on that day, I had to fax her the request. Now, if the VA CBOC clinic cannot process something as small as paperwork, what more patient care, quality of life. Thank you.

Chairman Aguon:

Thank you very much, Ms. Moore. Thank you for presenting your testimony this evening.

Mr. John Quidachay:

Senator Aguon, BJ Cruz, Mr. Morrison, and especially Mr. Ada and Mrs. Torres. My name is John A. Quidachay. I'm also a retiree. You know, coming over here, when I heard there's a veterans public hearing going on. I have time to dress up like this. I know I got long hair, but anyway, I come over here to let you know that I have no problem calling my medicine in Hawai'i, or in Washington, or when I visit the VA clinic. I don't have a problem. These guys are doing an outstanding job. Or when I go up to the federal in a way, I could thanks the federal that's here. They are all professionals. Listen to these guys here, they're all complaining. It's nice to be complaining, but I don't see no problem. These guys have to be productive. Make sure they know what they're doing. They're gonna have an inspector general to come over here. That's a waste of time. I think it's a waste of time to you, Mr. Chairman. Who's the chairman? Mr. Aguon, right? Senator Aguon is the chairman? Okay. I have little problem. I've been taken care. I got PTSD. I'm not here for the purple heart. I'm here myself to support this bill. I mean not to support the bill. I'm here to let you know that I'm not for this bill. This bill is highly political suicide. Whatever you guys are doing. To me, you just ordering me to go up there and see these guys. These guys, like the veterans at Asan, the Naval Hospital. If you go up there, you'll see what they're doing. I don't see no complaints. As a matter of fact, I'm in the process of this PTSD that I got from my second gunshot wound. As a matter of fact, I got an appointment tomorrow. I don't have to wait for 30 days or something. The guy . That held me here is the late Maj. Guerrero. He's the one that says, "Look out for John Quidachay. Look out for John Quidachay."

Mr. John Quidachay:

That means you have to go out yourself. If you go out and keep on asking around, I mean ask me for something. You need to go out there and see these guys. That's what I did. I'm just here to let you know. I did provide some document, but I'm not here for the Purple Heart. The one that I had there. I think it will show that brown star. I wear that. Right now, it's missing. It took me to be 65 years old and it really bothered me. Just because I'm the only one Chamorro on the platoon or the company. I was really sad. I was the only one Chamorro. They don't like Chamorros. When I was down in Vietnam, I was the only one. I guess it's because I volunteered. I'm a hardcore. I did a lot of things down there in Vietnam. So, there's missing there. Maybe your logo was in next in line on this award I got here. That's why I'm here for that. There's a lot of things there when you read it. One full-page and that's since 1968/69. That's a true story. I did and I'm a PTSD man. So just to let you know, thank you for hearing me. Thank you very much.

Chairman Aguon:

Thank you, Mr. Quidachay, for your testimony this evening. Folks, thank you for your service to our island, to our country. Mr. Manglona if I can invite you up and if there's anyone else in the audience who would like to provide testimony and who has not signed up, I invite you up to the front. I apologize Rodney. I understand you have an additional testimony and then, we'll entertain Mr. Manglona and Jesse. Go ahead. You may proceed.

Mr. Rodney Cruz:

Hafa Aдай, senators, again. My name is Rodney Cruz. This testimony is my personal experience with the CBOC here in Guam over the past 5 years.

[Written testimony attached.]

Chairman Aguon:

Thank you again Mr. Cruz for your testimony this evening. Mr. Dydasco? And then we'll go to Mr. Manglona.

Mr. Jesse Dydasco:

Good evening senators. I didn't really prepare myself. As I was listening today and I'm going to make my impromptu speech short, I come to a lot of the public hearing where it interests me. I took civic and in Catholic school down in Mt. Carmel, and I'll tell you that teaches me how to be involved with the people that surround me whether it's the nation, whether it's in the Far East, whether it's here at our home, and I find it educates me, and the few things that I like to say here is I disagree with some of the comments that were done today. First of all, number one, the only governor from all the territories and the 50 states that ever went down to Vietnam, who went down there with a guy by the name of Johnny Sablan, the first entertainer, the icon. They were down there and went. The governor went down there and he had asked for all the family members, if they would like to send a tape of themselves, a picture of themselves, and he went down there and of course a lot of Chamorros weren't down there because they had to go out. The Marines have to go out there and do the recon. Somebody has to protect the perimeter, but Governor Camacho was down there. The only governor that ever went down there, and you know tell you what. It brought a lot of joy. It brought a lot of pride to the Chamorros that were down there, that attended the place, and I just felt that I think I should bring that up, and I also want to say that I frequent the CBOC.

Mr. Jesse Dydasco:

In the last month and a half, I had acupuncture my back because I was having back problems, and I also have a surgery just last week by Doctor Lamstrom, and I just got my glasses, thank God, for free because of the VA, and I'll tell you the VA is not perfect, but I might second his motion. Doctor Gil is one of the best doctors that we have up there, and I'm telling this. No offense to the other one, but I'm sure they've done their best, but I'm just saying that thank God for the VA. I'm very well taken care of, and I just want to say too that I like to make things short because remember Mr. Douglas when he was going against Abraham Lincoln. He spoke about two hours about himself and what he was going to do. Abraham Lincoln made an eight minute speech and said four score and seven years ago. That speech was remembered more than what Mr. Douglas said, and he became the 16th president of the United States of America. Thank you ladies and gentlemen.

Chairman Aguon:

Thank you very much Mr. Dydasco. I appreciate your testimony this evening. Mr. Manglona please identify yourself for the record and please proceed. You may proceed Mr. Manglona.

Mr. Martin Manglona:

Good evening Senator Aguon, speakers, distinguished senators. It's a shame that we've come to this situation to have this type of hearing. You hear both side of the story. I'm going to tell you some of the facts, but for myself, I do not support this legislation. Let me start. A gentleman had mentioned about Madeleine Bordallo, and I guess that's your father that went to Vietnam. I was one of the delegation in 1968. I was in infantry, and I was platoon sergeant for an infantry unit. Out of the blue, I got called on the radio, the load is coming up there to pick me up, and it created morale for all these Chamorros. Maybe people have a different perception, but when the governor comes to Vietnam, thank God for your father because he created a lot of spirit there. The morale was so high, and I've never seen a governor spend time, to devote his time to combat. When Governor Bordallo came to Europe, I was his sponsor when he came with Madeleine. I have to relay. I have 2000 Chamorros in Europe released for the purpose, and people should understand that they leave their loved ones here to look after the veterans, and I am thankful that your father and Governor Bordallo and probably Madeleine. You hear all the stories, but you know credit should be given where it's due. The facts I'm going to give you this afternoon because some individual mentioned about difficulty getting treatment at the Outreach program. Let me give you some statistics. The readjustment counseling individual family. You know they go out to the National Guard before they get deployed and do an outreach briefing. They have seen almost 4000 veterans in counseling. 4000. Right now they have only 200 open cases. Not only Guam, but they go to Commonwealth, they go to Palau, they go to Kosrae, they go to Majuro, Marshall Islands. Just that outreach program has to cover not only Guam but Micronesia. so you have to see the big vast of responsibility. The headquarters is in California. California. But they help a lot of veterans. You know I just hate to see a veteran complain. I came for both myself as a veteran and also as a director for the Veterans Administration in Guam. What I like to do, I just got this job six weeks ago, but we got to put in perspective. I heard people about registering veterans. I just talk to Mr. Pfeiffer this morning in Hawaii. He's the director for the benefit, for the medical. We are in constant communication. We have people from Tiyan right back here. We communicate weekly on veterans benefit. Weekly. And they do the darnedest to help us out. Some people on the side try to make things worse, but you know we have to take care of a problem here, and I agree with Cundliff and Dan Mendiola. This is just an in house problem, and we could take care of it. I just talked to Ms. Santos this morning. I go up there almost everyday. So I know the problem. Let me tell you the turnaround time on the appointment is three days. Three days. you could walk in. The maximum is three days to five days on appointment time. The turnaround time on benefit is one hundred and nineteen days. One hundred and nineteen. If you put your benefit now, one hundred and nineteen days. We are working. By December we should go down to zero because we have the technology. Really we should appreciate for all the things we have been doing.

Mr. Martin Manglona:

We're making changes. We talk about numbers. You know that every veteran that registered at CBOC received \$2500. How many veterans registered up there. Thirty-six hundred right now. How many veterans registered in Guam? I have twenty three thousand. Twenty three thousand registered in my office right now. Twenty three thousand. What we need to do: we talk about different registration. I have a system. I created a system. Right now the individual comes in. I met with the hospital commander. I met with the tri-care and met with CBOC. I met with Dr. Santos. I met with these guys at Tiyan, and I also met with DMV. Every veteran that registered, we download. My target is by December this year, I'm going to get all the Veterans. I spoke with the mayor August last year. Remember when I talk to each island mayor to have the mayor help me out. I just spoke with mayor three weeks ago. I was their guest speaker. What they're going to do is to give me the schedule, the date and time, I'm going to have either Felix Casimiro or Marjorie Hunter will go to each village and register the veterans. The more veterans we have the better we are, but let me tell you the ratio. Every doctor should have nine hundred to a thousand patients. Nine hundred to a thousand patients by ratio national wise. Right now as a matter of fact I just gave it to the chairman, we have four teams. Two days starting July 20th. Two days they're going to spend at northern clinic. Two days at southern clinic. They got four teams from Hawaii. So in that way, at least we have ample doctors, but we need to register, please, we need to register at CBOC. That's the only way to allocate more slots because according to the registration, all we need is three doctors because every thousand patients is one doctor, but we have to register. How many times we've been messing around with registration? For so many years, somebody made a comment. As a matter of fact, last year I took the numbers from the veterans administration from Washington D.C. Eight thousand only registered. Eight thousand because a lot of people doesn't registered. Just this morning I had to get the former governor Gutierrez to register this morning. We have a lot of people that are veterans and did not register. Let me give an example. The one that owns Ambrose. He's an artillery man. Never registered. The one that owns Personal Finance. Mr. Camacho never registered. And those are artillery people. They're veterans, but they don't have either the courage or the drive to go down and register. We have to register. That's all gone, but let's. You know really it amazes me to have this type of hearing because we can fix it in house. We're the process to fix this. We have the amount of doctors now allocated on Guam. We have full teams. If any veteran, please, comes to your office, direct him to my office, and I'll take care of it. That's my job. I don't want to be. You know you spend your quality time on somebody's problem. That's my job as the veterans' administration here. We got to work together. It just amazes me to call some of these gentlemen that they're doing their job. They're really doing their job. It's just the matter of putting people at the right place, and let the people do their job. Because when I came here I got people going different directions trying to register. That's my job, and it's mandated. You're the people that write the law, and it's mandated that I have to do the registration. All i need is the personnel. I'm sorry I just blew my cool, but really I just hate to see people bad mouthing CBOC and also the outreach program. They're doing a fantastic job. It's just a matter of working together. All it takes is good leadership, and if you have a problem. I talk to Dr. Gil almost daily. To Dr. Head. All those doctors. To Tiyan. So that's my job. If any veteran comes to you, refer to Asan. If you go up to Asan and one of my people didn't take care of you, I want you to tell me personally because that office is their office, and if somebody turned them around, they won't have a job. I'll tell you they won't have a job because my job is that we take care of all veterans, and I thank you for listening to me.

Chairman Aguon:

Thank you Mr. Manglona and certainly best wishes in your continual service to our veterans. Just one thing to bring to your attention, I know that the veterans registry is public law, and you were provided approximately \$50,000 within the governor's transfer authority to assist you with that veterans registry so I certainly hope by the end of the FY that you're able to access some of those resources because that's one of the issues brought up during the course of discussion. You know in listening very intently to our veterans who spoke today because we heard from both sides. Issues with regards to medical treatment, issues with regard to the process, and there is just one thing that really sticks out to my mind in terms to the comments that were shared, both pros and cons, is that it's a systemic issue. When you have medical physicians coming to Guam and unfortunately leaving before the conclusion or within a few months of their contract term, there's an issue. And that's where, actually Congressman Miller, who's the Chairman of the Veteran's Affairs Committee out of the US Congress, he was briefed on this particular issue, and I understand that Congresswoman Bordallo is working to try to address it because it's a system issue that has to be, perhaps, addressed by Congress, but there are issues with regards to our veteran services. I mean we heard from a number of veterans today that this particular resolution, albeit I'm not going to speak on behalf of the other two sponsors of this resolution, but you really think about an outside entity coming in and conducting an assessment of exactly the level of services being provided to our veterans, and that would be one issue that would really stick out. So if the IG's office, Inspector General's Office, were to step forward and identify that as an issue, then it would force the system to address it. That's what I'm sharing with you. Not necessarily perhaps the resolution I know for a fact based on the work that has been ongoing and some of the information that you provided, the resolution has to be clarified and made sure that it's factual. In terms of reinforcing the current information because we certainly, or I certainly don't want to have my name on top of a resolution presenting information that perhaps could be outdated, but I believe that with all the inspections that were conducted in VA programs nationwide that Guam deserves to be added to that list. So that in fact they can conduct an outside assessment if the services are equivalent to what other jurisdictions getting the investment dollars to our veterans are equivalent to what other jurisdictions are getting then at least our veterans will know that based on the resources that are being put forward throughout the veterans system in terms of medical treatment and services and benefits that Guam is at the same level. If not, then that would give us even more reason and give Congresswoman Bordallo even more tools and resources at her disposal to put in an additional argument that our veterans in Guam, using a term that was used a little earlier, are not second class veterans. Our veterans should be provided with the services, the medical treatment, and the benefits that each and every veteran across the nation has earned by virtue of donning the uniform, and as a fellow veteran, I'm sure that you certainly feel, in regards to equity being applied across the board. So that's the purpose of the introduction of the resolution. It's to see what we can do to make sure that we get an outside assessment as to the level of services and treatment and benefits that our veterans are receiving, and I want to thank some of our veterans that brought this up, and you may have alluded to it. We have good people working in the system, but perhaps there are some issues in the system that restricts their ability to be able to provide continuous care to our veterans as it applies to receiving benefits or as it applies to receiving medical treatment. So, I will close with that particular comment because I still believe very strongly that having a third, outside entity come in and evaluate the system may provide the veteran community in Guam with additional resources and a tool to say we want equity here. If that evaluation says otherwise, that veterans on Guam, you are getting equivalent to, if not additional, resources being allocated to veterans in the community of Guam then our veteran community would understand that, and we'll continue to press obviously for improvement in the processes, but not necessarily perhaps addressing the other issues that are highlighted here. Let me close with that comment. Senators?

Mr. Martin Manglona:

Senators let me just clarify one thing.

Senator Tom Ada:

You've already had your turn. I have no doubt that the folks that are providing services up at CBOC, up at the benefits office, up at Tiyan, any other offices that have been stood up to provide services are doing the best they can with the resources that they have, and while we've had veterans that have come up and said "I've got no problem. You know whenever I need to see somebody." Well then that's great, and I'm really happy for them. What do we do with guys like, I'm not debating, I'm just giving my perception just the same way as everyone has had the chance to express their opinion, what do we do with somebody like Mr. Cruz who obviously has some very serious problems and the kind of response that the system is giving to him or Mr. Zaragoza who now has gone missed twice the six month check up because it's taken that long? What do we do with those guys? you know so we can paint as nicely as we want, but the fact is we still got some fellow veterans who are not getting the attention that they need, and if in fact you're saying that if, I hope you took the names then of the guys that came up here tonight and expressed the difficulties that they're having, and I hope that you can get their problems resolved then by the end of the week. Otherwise, you know, I think we have a system that needs looking at. I think that's all that we're saying now. This thing about having someone else come in to our house and take a look, well guess what happened when this thing got published. Oh my goodness all of a sudden nurses come falling out of the sky. Doctors get shown up now. I don't know. I mean we've seen that in the army. when we know that an IG is coming, oh my goodness. Things get cleaned up. I don't think anything is wrong with having an outside party come in, and that's not to say that the individuals who are here are not doing a good job. They're doing probably the best job that they can with the limited resources they have. Thank you.

Chairman Aguon:

Thank you Senator Tom. Senators, any other statement or comment? If not we're going to conclude this public hearing on resolution 111-33. I want to thank all of our fellow veterans for not only tuning in but also for providing testimony this evening, and the office will continue to receive testimony for the subsequent ten days on this particular resolution, written testimony, and I appreciate everyone's attendance and attention tonight. Thank you very much.

The Public Hearing was Adjourned at: 7:37 P.M.

III. WRITTEN TESTIMONY

The following individuals submitted written testimonies to the Committee on Guam U.S Military Relocation, Public Safety, and Judiciary before or after the schedule public hearing on Tuesday, June 23 2015 at 5:00PM in *Liheslatura's* Public Hearing Room.

1. **The Honorable Madeleine Z. Bordallo, Congresswoman**
2. **James Esperon, Veteran**
3. **Rodney A. Cruz, Veteran**
4. **Rodney A. Cruz, Founder/President, Iraq Afghanistan and Persian Gulf Veterans of the Pacific**
5. **Juan Finona, Veteran**
6. **Greg Borja, Veteran**
7. **Enrique Agustin, Veteran**
8. **Ashley Cruz, Spouse of disabled Veteran**

IV. FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS


The Committee on Guam U.S Military Relocation, Public Safety, and Judiciary hereby reports out As
Substituted Resolution No. 111-33(COR) with the recommendation: TO DO PASS

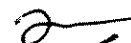


I MINA'TRENTAI TRES NA LIHESLATURAN GUÅHAN
2015 (FIRST) Regular Session

Resolution No. 111-33 (COR)

Introduced by:

FRANK B. AGUON, JR. 

T.C. Ada 

T.A. Morrison 

Relative to requesting Guam's Delegate to the Congress of the United States to call for an investigation from the Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General to substantiate allegations into access barriers adversely affecting the quality of primary and specialty care, and mismanagement at the Veterans Affairs Guam Community Based Outpatient Clinic and the Guam Vet Center.

2015 MAY 22 AM 10:46 

1 **BE IT RESOLVED BY *I MINA'TRENTAI TRES NA LIHESLATURAN***
2 ***GUÅHAN*:**

3 **WHEREAS, *I Liheslaturan Guåhan*** recognizes that the purpose of the
4 Veterans Affairs (VA) Guam Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) located
5 at 498 Chalan Palayso, Agana Heights, is to provide primary health care to eligible
6 veterans using available resources; and

7 **WHEREAS, *I Liheslaturan Guåhan*** further recognizes that the purpose of
8 the Guam Vet Center located at the Reflection Center, 222 Chalan Santo Papa
9 Street, Suite 20, Hagåtña, is to provide quality readjustment counseling to veterans
10 while assisting them and their family members toward a successful post-war
11 adjustment in or near their community; and

1 **WHEREAS**, the Guam CBOC and Guam Vet Center has a process to
2 provide access to a mental health assessment, triage, and stabilization; there
3 remains problems with continuity of mental health care and care transitions, delays
4 in assignment to a dedicated health care provider, and limited access to
5 psychotherapy services; and

6 **WHEREAS**, there have been allegations from veterans claiming instances
7 of clinically significant delays in care associated with access to care or patient
8 scheduling; and

9 **WHEREAS**, the effects of these delays are unacceptable and compounding
10 uncertainties such as: troubling lapses in follow-up, coordination, quality, and
11 continuity of care; and

12 **WHEREAS**, numerous concerns have been voiced at the December 2014
13 veterans' town-hall to Mr. Wayne L. Pfeffer, Director, Veterans Affairs Pacific
14 Islands Health Care System (VAPIHCS) and Mrs. Sheila M. Cullen, Network
15 Director, VA Sierra Pacific Network (VISN 21), regarding the waitlist and staffing
16 challenges at the Guam CBOC; and

17 **WHEREAS**, the number of veterans facing wait times is still the same and
18 staffing challenges continue to exist with the resignation of another Primary Care
19 doctor at the Guam CBOC; and

20 **WHEREAS**, Guam's veteran community are disappointed, frustrated, and
21 have lost faith with the VAPIHCS that has not adequately responded to their
22 mental and physical health needs in a timely manner; and

23 **WHEREAS**, the VAPIHCS has failed to perform its chief mission to deliver
24 high quality health care as the result of management decisions compromising the
25 most important mission of providing veterans with quality health care; and

26 **WHEREAS**, the Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISN 21) do not
27 consistently support local Guam CBOC, the Guam Vet Center, and the Choice

1 Card program to encourage success and proactively address areas of risk, cost-
2 effective resource management data gaps, and internal processes are inefficient and
3 make the conduct of routine business unnecessarily burdensome; and

4 **WHEREAS**, *I Liheslaturan Guåhan*, on behalf of various Veteran Service
5 Organizations, have called upon Guam's Delegate to the Congress of the United
6 States to call for the VA Office of the Inspector General to expand their
7 investigations at VAPIHCS to the Guam CBOC and Guam Vet Center to improve
8 operational activities relating to data integrity, public contact, mail
9 mismanagement, and other areas of concern; now, therefore, be it

10 **RESOLVED**, that *I Mina'Trentai Tres Liheslaturan Guåhan*, on behalf of
11 the people of Guam, request Guam's Delegate to the Congress of the United States
12 to call for an investigation from the Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General to
13 substantiate allegations into access barriers adversely affecting the quality of
14 primary and specialty care, and mismanagement at the Veterans Affairs Guam
15 Community Based Outpatient Clinic and the Guam Vet Center; and be it further;

16 **RESOLVED**, that the Speaker and the Chairperson of the Committee on
17 Rules certify, and the Legislative Secretary attest to, the adoption hereof, and that
18 copies of the same be thereafter transmitted to the Honorable Madeleine Z.
19 Bordallo, Guam Delegate to the U.S. Congress; Secretary Robert McDonald, U.S.
20 Department of Veterans Affairs; the Honorable Richard J. Griffin, Acting
21 Inspector General, VA Office of Inspector General; Mr. Wayne L. Pfeffer,
22 Director, Veterans Affairs Pacific Islands Health Care System; Guam Veterans
23 Commission; Iraq Afghanistan Persian Gulf Veterans of the Pacific; Guam
24 Veterans Affairs Office; National Association for Uniformed Services; Third
25 Marine Division Association; Veterans' of Guam Motorcycle Club; Guam Vet
26 Center; American Legion; Guam Community Based Outpatient Clinic; Philippine
27 Scouts and World War II Association; Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 2917, Guam

1 U.S. Air Force Association.; Ladies Auxiliary - Military Order of the Purple Heart;
2 Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1509; Army Retirees Association; Ladies Auxiliary
3 - VFW Post 1509; Vietnam Veterans of America #668; Barrigada Veterans
4 Organization; Guam Retiree Activities Office; Military Order of the Purple Heart
5 Chapter 2007; Fleet Reserve Association BR 73; Military Order of the Purple
6 Heart; Military Order of the Purple Heart Chapter 787; Dededo Veterans
7 Organization; Fleet Reserve Association 73 Auxiliary; Commander for Chapter 43-
8 Women Veterans of America; Guam Women’s Veteran Association; Guam
9 Women’s Veteran Association; Guam Vietnamese American Association;
10 Brotherhood of Veterans; Military Order of the Purple Heart Chapter 1315;
11 American Legion; Korean War Veterans Association; Guam HAWGS Motorcycle
12 Club; Harley Owners Group; Ladies Auxiliary - VFW Post 2917; Guam HAWGS
13 Motorcycle Club; Guam National Guard; Harley Owners Group; Ladies Auxiliary
14 - VFW Post 2917; West Care Pacific Islands; and the Honorable Edward B. Calvo,
15 *I Maga’lahen Guåhan.*

16

**DULY AND REGULARLY ADOPTED BY THE COMMITTEE ON RULES
OF *I MINA'TRENTAI TRES NA LIHESLATURAN GUÅHAN* ON THE
_____ DAY OF MAY 2015.**

JUDITH T. WONPAT, Ed D
Speaker

RORY J. RESPICIO
Chairperson, Committee on Rules

TINA ROSE MUÑA-BARNES
Legislative Secretary

I MINA'TRENTAI TRES NA LIHESLATURAN GUÅHAN
2015 (FIRST) Regular Session

Resolution No. 111-33 (COR)
as substituted by the primary sponsors

Introduced by:

FRANK B. AGUON, JR.
T.C. Ada
T.A. Morrison

Relative to requesting the United States Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald to call for the Veterans Health Administration to conduct a system-wide audit of scheduling and access management practices at the Guam Community Based Outpatient Clinic; and to assess the integrity of these practices; and if necessary, provide recommendations to improve services to Guam's Veterans.

1 **BE IT RESOLVED BY *I MINA'TRENTAI TRES NA LIHESLATURAN***
2 ***GUÅHAN*:**

3 **WHEREAS,** *I Liheslaturan Guåhan* recognizes that the purpose of the
4 Veterans Affairs (VA) Guam Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) located
5 at 498 Chalan Palayso, Agana Heights, is to provide primary health care to eligible
6 veterans using available resources; and

7 **WHEREAS,** numerous concerns have been communicated at the December
8 2014 veterans' town-hall to Mr. Wayne L. Pfeffer, Director, VAPIHCS and to
9 Mrs. Sheila M. Cullen, Network Director, VA Sierra Pacific Network (VISN 21),
10 regarding the waitlist and staffing challenges at the Guam CBOC, feedback from
11 various Veteran Service Organizations, and social media communications; and

1 **WHEREAS**, members of Guam's veteran community have expressed
2 disappointment, frustration, and loss of confidence with the VAPIHCS as a result
3 of their mental and physical health concerns not being addressed in a timely
4 manner; and

5 **WHEREAS**, many members of Guam's veteran community would contend
6 that the accomplishment of the healthcare mission by the VAPIHCS (i.e. to
7 provide quality primary care to veterans), has been less than satisfactory; and

8 **WHEREAS**, *I Liheslaturan Guåhan* further recognizes the need to call for
9 an Access Audit at the Guam CBOC to evaluate the effectiveness and
10 responsiveness of the health services provided to veterans on Guam; and

11 **WHEREAS**, *I Liheslaturan Guåhan* asserts that the evaluation must begin
12 at the Veterans Affairs Pacific Islands Health Care System (VAPIHCS) to
13 determine the downstream effect of the decision making processes therein, and the
14 allocation of resources to the Guam CBOC for the veterans on Guam; and

15 **WHEREAS**, the desired audit and evaluation should also, be conducted at
16 the Guam CBOC to obtain a full appreciation of the challenges that the veterans on
17 Guam and the Guam CBOC must contend with on a daily basis; and

18 **WHEREAS**, this Access Audit will gauge front-line staff understanding of
19 proper scheduling processes; assess the frequency and pervasiveness of both
20 desired and undesirable practices employed to record Veteran preferences for
21 appointment dates, manage waiting lists, and process requests for specialty
22 consultation; and identify factors that interfere with schedulers' ability to facilitate
23 timely care for Veterans; and

24 **WHEREAS**, *I Liheslaturan Guåhan* respectfully requests that all of the
25 information collected from the audit site visits be shared with the following: VA's
26 Office of Inspector General (OIG), the Honorable Congresswoman Madeleine Z.
27 Bordallo, the Honorable Senators of the Thirty-third (33) *I Liheslaturan Guåhan*,

1 the Guam Veterans Affairs Office (GVAO) Administrator, and the Honorable
2 Governor Edward B. Calvo, *I Maga'lahaen Guåhan*; and

3 **WHEREAS**, *I Liheslaturan Guåhan*, on behalf of various Veteran Service
4 Organizations, have called upon the United States Secretary of Veterans Affairs
5 Robert A. McDonald to engage in immediate improvement at VAPIHCS and the
6 Guam CBOC, so we can fully realize three important goals: rebuild trust with
7 Guam's Veterans and all stakeholders; focus completely on Veterans' outcomes to
8 improve delivery of services; and set a course for long-term excellence and
9 improvement; now, therefore, be it

10 **RESOLVED**, that *I Mina'Trentai Tres Liheslaturan Guåhan*, on behalf of
11 the people of Guam, request the United States Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert
12 A. McDonald to call for the Veterans Health Administration to conduct a system-
13 wide audit of scheduling and access management practices at the Guam
14 Community Based Outpatient Clinic; and to assess the integrity of these practices;
15 and if necessary, provide recommendations to improve services to Guam's
16 Veterans; and be it further;

17 **RESOLVED**, that the Speaker and the Chairperson of the Committee on
18 Rules certify, and the Legislative Secretary attest to, the adoption hereof, and that
19 copies of the same be thereafter transmitted to the Honorable Robert A. McDonald,
20 United States Secretary of Veterans Affairs; the Honorable Dr. David J. Shulkin,
21 MD, Under Secretary for Health , Veterans Affairs; the Honorable Madeleine Z.
22 Bordallo, Guam Delegate to the U.S. Congress; Mr. Wayne L. Pfeffer, Director,
23 Veterans Affairs Pacific Islands Health Care System; Mr. Martin Ada Manglona,
24 CSM (Ret), Administrator, Guam Veterans Affairs Office; and the Honorable
25 Edward B. Calvo, *I Maga'lahaen Guåhan*.

26

**DULY AND REGULARLY ADOPTED BY THE COMMITTEE ON RULES
OF *I MINA'TRENTAI TRES NA LIHESLATURAN GUÁHAN* ON THE
_____ DAY OF AUGUST 2015.**

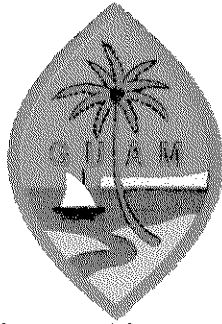
JUDITH T. WONPAT, Ed D
Speaker

RORY J. RESPICIO
Chairperson, Committee on Rules

TINA ROSE MUÑA-BARNES
Legislative Secretary

COMMITTEE ON GUAM U.S. MILITARY RELOCATION, PUBLIC SAFETY & JUDICIARY

I Mina' Trentai Tres Na Liheslaturan Guahan | 33rd Guam Legislature



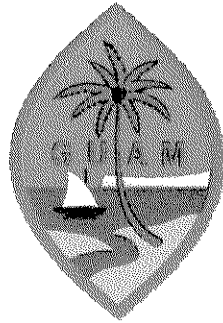
SENATOR FRANK B. AGUON, JR. **CHAIRMAN**

Resolution No. 111-33 (COR): - Relative to requesting Guam's Delegate to the Congress of the United States to call for an investigation from the Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General to substantiate allegations into access barriers adversely affecting the quality of primary and specialty care, and mismanagement at the Veterans Affairs Guam Community Based Outpatient Clinic and the Guam Vet Center. Sponsored by: Senator Frank B. Aguon, Jr., Senator T.C. Ada, Senator Tommy Morrison

Name (Please Print)	Agency/Organization	Contact Number	Oral Testimony	Written Testimony	In favor	Not In Favor
<i>* Anthony Perez</i>	<i>MUPot</i>					

COMMITTEE ON GUAM U.S. MILITARY RELOCATION, PUBLIC SAFETY & JUDICIARY

I Mina' Trentai Tres Na Liheslaturan Guahan | 33rd Guam Legislature



SENATOR FRANK B. AGUON, JR.
CHAIRMAN

Resolution No. 111-33 (COR): - Relative to requesting Guam's Delegate to the Congress of the United States to call for an investigation from the Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General to substantiate allegations into access barriers adversely affecting the quality of primary and specialty care, and mismanagement at the Veterans Affairs Guam Community Based Outpatient Clinic and the Guam Vet Center. Sponsored by: Senator Frank B. Aguon, Jr., Senator T.C. Ada, Senator Tommy Morrison

Name (Please Print)	Agency/Organization	Contact Number	Oral Testimony	Written Testimony	In favor	Not In Favor
x Chong Edward						
x BLAS, FRED		482-3072				
✓ Dydasco Jesse		686-7075				

COMMITTEE ON GUAM U.S. MILITARY RELOCATION, PUBLIC SAFETY & JUDICIARY

I Mina' Trentai Tres Na Liheslaturan Guahan | 33rd Guam Legislature



SENATOR FRANK B. AGUON, JR. CHAIRMAN

Resolution No. 111-33 (COR): - Relative to requesting Guam's Delegate to the Congress of the United States to call for an investigation from the Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General to substantiate allegations into access barriers adversely affecting the quality of primary and specialty care, and mismanagement at the Veterans Affairs Guam Community Based Outpatient Clinic and the Guam Vet Center. Sponsored by: Senator Frank B. Aguon, Jr., Senator T.C. Ada, Senator Tommy Morrison

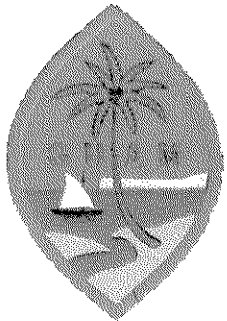
Name (Please Print)	Agency/Organization	Contact Number	Oral Testimony	Written Testimony	In favor	Not In Favor
x Roland V.M. Ada		689-4232				
✓ John Quiñones	MOPH	929-1969 565-7837	✓			
x HENRY MANCOSA		828-2519				
x JOAN MANGLORE		689-2521				
✓ J.C. Moore		777-3210				

COMMITTEE ON GUAM U.S. MILITARY RELOCATION, PUBLIC SAFETY & JUDICIARY

I Mina' Trentai Tres Na Liheslaturan Guahan | 33rd Guam Legislature



SENATOR FRANK B. AGUON, JR.
CHAIRMAN



Resolution No. 111-33 (COR): - Relative to requesting Guam's Delegate to the Congress of the United States to call for an investigation from the Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General to substantiate allegations into access barriers adversely affecting the quality of primary and specialty care, and mismanagement at the Veterans Affairs Guam Community Based Outpatient Clinic and the Guam Vet Center. Sponsored by: Senator Frank B. Aguon, Jr., Senator T.C. Ada, Senator Tommy Morrison

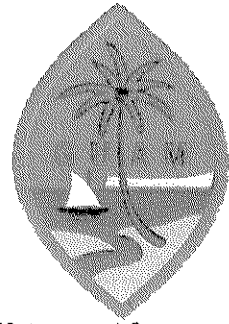
Name (Please Print)	Agency/Organization	Contact Number	Oral Testimony	Written Testimony	In favor	Not In Favor
X TOM DIEULI	MOPH - 5701	727-1495	✓		✓	
X LESLIE SAINT-JOHN	AF/MT	727-5415	✓		✓	
X Anthony James	Queng WA	486-2016			✓	
X DANIEL PEREZ	BVO BARR-VETERANS	734-7215	✓			✓
X Ricardo Cruz	People's HEART	777-5047			APC	

COMMITTEE ON GUAM U.S. MILITARY RELOCATION, PUBLIC SAFETY & JUDICIARY

I Mina' Trentai Tres Na Liheslaturan Guahan | 33rd Guam Legislature



SENATOR FRANK B. AGUON, JR. CHAIRMAN

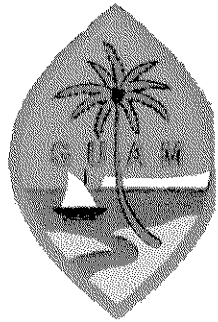


Resolution No. 111-33 (COR): - Relative to requesting Guam's Delegate to the Congress of the United States to call for an investigation from the Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General to substantiate allegations into access barriers adversely affecting the quality of primary and specialty care, and mismanagement at the Veterans Affairs Guam Community Based Outpatient Clinic and the Guam Vet Center. Sponsored by: Senator Frank B. Aguon, Jr., Senator T.C. Ada, Senator Tommy Morrison

Name (Please Print)	Agency/Organization	Contact Number	Oral Testimony	Written Testimony	In favor	Not In Favor
✓ DAN Mendiola	VVA 468	477-8406				
X ROB SAN AGUSTIN	OFF OF CONGRESSWOMAN BOROMO	477-4272				
✓ Fernando Esteves	VA Health Council	489-9016				

COMMITTEE ON GUAM U.S. MILITARY RELOCATION, PUBLIC SAFETY & JUDICIARY

I Mina' Trentai Tres Na Liheslaturan Guahan | 33rd Guam Legislature



SENATOR FRANK B. AGUON, JR. CHAIRMAN

Resolution No. 111-33 (COR): - Relative to requesting Guam's Delegate to the Congress of the United States to call for an investigation from the Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General to substantiate allegations into access barriers adversely affecting the quality of primary and specialty care, and mismanagement at the Veterans Affairs Guam Community Based Outpatient Clinic and the Guam Vet Center. Sponsored by: Senator Frank B. Aguon, Jr., Senator T.C. Ada, Senator Tommy Morrison

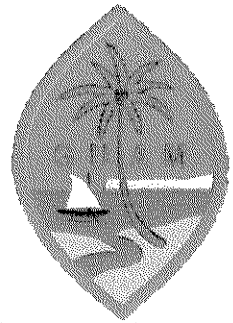
Name (Please Print)	Agency/Organization	Contact Number	Oral Testimony	Written Testimony	In favor	Not In Favor
✓ Jimmy Pangel	Vet	4821835			✓	also ✓
✓ Bill Crawford	Vet Comm	5657561				—
✓ Marlene Slawka	TEAM CORE	688-8889				
✓ Rodney Cruz	IAPGVD	486-1157	✓	✓	✓	
x Dan Munoz	IAPGVD	688-2112			✓	
✓ Ryan Mavricha	VET	7771036	✓			
x Peter Sgo	Guam + Regional Veterans Healthcare Unit	688-7476	✓		✓	

COMMITTEE ON GUAM U.S. MILITARY RELOCATION, PUBLIC SAFETY & JUDICIARY

I Mina' Trentai Tres Na Liheslaturan Guahan | 33rd Guam Legislature



SENATOR FRANK B. AGUON, JR.
CHAIRMAN



Resolution No. 111-33 (COR): - Relative to requesting Guam's Delegate to the Congress of the United States to call for an investigation from the Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General to substantiate allegations into access barriers adversely affecting the quality of primary and specialty care, and mismanagement at the Veterans Affairs Guam Community Based Outpatient Clinic and the Guam Vet Center. Sponsored by: Senator Frank B. Aguon, Jr., Senator T.C. Ada, Senator Tommy Morrison

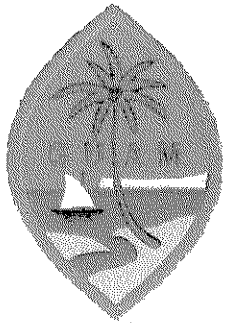
Name (Please Print)	Agency/Organization	Contact Number	Oral Testimony	Written Testimony	In favor	Not In Favor
✓ ENRIQUE AGUON	AS, INDIVIDUAL	489-7414	✓	✓		ⓧ

COMMITTEE ON GUAM U.S. MILITARY RELOCATION, PUBLIC SAFETY & JUDICIARY

I Mina' Trentai Tres Na Liheslaturan Guahan | 33rd Guam Legislature



SENATOR FRANK B. AGUON, JR. CHAIRMAN



Resolution No. 111-33 (COR): - Relative to requesting Guam's Delegate to the Congress of the United States to call for an investigation from the Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General to substantiate allegations into access barriers adversely affecting the quality of primary and specialty care, and mismanagement at the Veterans Affairs Guam Community Based Outpatient Clinic and the Guam Vet Center. Sponsored by: Senator Frank B. Aguon, Jr., Senator T.C. Ada, Senator Tommy Morrison

Name (Please Print)	Agency/Organization	Contact Number	Oral Testimony	Written Testimony	In favor	Not In Favor
✓ Raymond T. Boza	VFW Post 1309	989-4150			✓	
✓ Juan S. Finona	VVA Chapter 668	868-4351	✓			
✓ Alfred Zaragoza	Purple heart member	483 7721				
x LEE STAHLI	VETERAN	777-4517				
x Don Dare	Veteran	787-9434				
x Beverly Dare	Veteran	787-6249				
✓ MARTIN MANGLOSA	<u>VET AFFAIRS</u>	(Request to be Last)	✓			



Office of Senator Frank B. Aguon, Jr. <admin@frankaguonjr.com>

Fwd:

FBA <aguon4guam@gmail.com>

Wed, Jun 24, 2015 at 9:35 AM

To: "Office of Senator Frank B. Aguon" <admin@frankaguonjr.com>

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

From: james esperon <james.esperon@gmail.com>**Date:** June 23, 2015 at 1:43:25 PM ChST**To:** aguon4guam@gmail.com

sir my name is James Esperon. i am a veteran of both active and the Guam National Guard of 14+ years. im writing to you because i would like some of my testimony heard in tonights meeting.

the Guam CBOC has made many improvements, some good and some bad. yet the most i encountered with CBOC was when a security guard there was making fun of veterans coming and going. it got to the point were buttons were pushed and even counseling between the staff about this security guard's way of handling things around the VA. it got so bad to were the FBI was called to question me and other veterans on statements made and to verify if they were caused of threat towards the VA... it came back negative for i was receiving counseling but not hostile.

the VA pharmacy needs improvements. at times i was without medication and when i called to verify the shipping and estimate of arrival, they said it will take 4-6weeks for it to get here. if i would have known that from before i would have ordered it 8 weeks in advance so as not to run out of meds.

as for the primary care doctors there... they come and go... there is no real set in stone doc... they all go off of your medical records and sometimes doctors always forget to write down or type something out and when the new doctor comes he you have to explain yourself all over again...

with mental health, i have seen it all... im currently enrolled in the out patient PTSD adjustment counseling with Dr. Santos and with Vic Dungca. i believe they are helping me cope and understand readjusting to society for one Vic is also a vet himself. seeing him there assist me and other vets makes it more easier, i believe. as for the mental health at the CBOC well... its there but they are so back logged to see someone they differ them to Naval Hospital or even to an outside doctor.

so with that being said sir i wish i can add more however i need to catch another appointment. so until then sir take care God Bless and hopefully we can resolve this issues dealing with our nations greatest and island of warriors.

--

"WE MUST STAND FOR SOMETHING OR WE WILL FALL FOR ANYTHING"
"ONLY THE DEAD HAS SEEN THE END OF WAR"

ONLY TWO DEFINING FORCES HAVE EVER OFFERED TO DIE FOR YOU.... JESUS CHRIST
AND THE AMERICAN SOLDIER. ONE DIED FOR YOUR SOUL, THE OTHER FOR YOUR
FREEDOM.

Monday, June 22, 2015

Rodney A. Cruz Jr.
190 E San Antonio Ave
Dededo, Guam 96929

Honorable Senator
Frank B. Aguon Jr.
The 33rd Guam Legislature
155 Hesler Place, Suite 107
Hagatna, Guam 96910

Subject: Testimony on Department of Veterans Affairs Guam Healthcare System (VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC)), Public Hearing Resolution No. 111-33 (COR) – Relative to requesting Guam’s Delegate to the Congress of the United States to call for an investigation from the Veteran’s Office of Inspector General to substantiate allegations into access barriers adversely the quality of primary and specialty care, and mismanagement at the Veterans Affairs Guam Community Based Outpatient Clinic and the Guam Vet Center.

Hafa Adai,

Thank you Senators for recognizing my testimony today a veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom. I have faced many challenges involving the Guam Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) regarding my healthcare and this is my testimony.

Although before I present you with my personal experiences let be first to talk about my appreciation for Resolution No. 111-33 and allowing this public hearing to come forth. We are here today not because of the genuine facility that was built in response to the old Naval Hospital E Wing that a community of veterans voiced their concerns that it was inadequately funded and provided limited care to the veterans on Guam and the troublesome of dealing with access to the VA Health Care through the Dept. of Navy. Nevertheless, we are not here because of the few who receive tremendous quality of care from certain providers without a doubt and have forgotten those they have served by in the jungles of Vietnam and in the hot deserts of Iraq and Afghanistan, but we are truly here today for the reasons that the Guam VA Health Care patient care service in broad have affected the lives of many veterans to include myself and the recent death of a fellow Afghanistan Veterans who by many have served our country and our island.

Let’s this hearing be about listening to the stories that a veteran, a disabled veteran, a combat veteran, and his family who have endured the pain of not only being denied care, but as well a system that exist in Honolulu that fails to provide quality care in developing the Veterans Healthcare of Excellence on Guam. Guam has been the sore behind the ear for the VA Pacific Island Health Care System many years and has been under the purview by those who sit in state of the art office in Honolulu and VISIN 21 in San Francisco, for them Guam has not been a priority for the sole reasons of our status as a territory and the troublesome of providing a population count of veterans.

I am here to represent myself on the challenges that I have faced in the past five (5) years as a veteran who had to travel to the mainland for proper treatment and care as a 2nd class citizen.

Here are some of the few issues and concerns that I have been affected by the Guam CBOC:

- I have waited a year to receive a referral to specialty care and had to request several times within that same year to get a referral to see a specialist all through which was filed with the Patient Advocate in Honolulu.
- The Guam CBOC had faxed my referral to a local specialist (SOAR Physical Therapy) one day after it had expired and having to wait over 6 months and then having to wait again another month for another referral from Honolulu to provide treatment for my military service connected injury.
- I am schedule for routine appointments however, that is cancelled or reschedule due to change in providers or shortage of providers, to include receiving a notification letter in the mail several weeks after the appointment date.
- I have to wait for my medication to be mailed to me from Honolulu, but unfortunately it has been arriving from Arizona instead of Hawaii, which causes more delay to treat my chronic pain.
- After seeing different primary care providers, I have gone through more than 4 different treatment plans; a total of five (5) different Primary Care Providers, to include inconsistent medication prescribed and conflicting treatment care plans to manage my injury/illnesses.
- I have VA Choice Card that entitles me under the Veteran's Choice Program which is part of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014, sadly as it is I am turned away for treatment outside the VA and still have to wait for Hawaii to approve the medical referral treatment if I decide to seek outside care which contradicts the Veterans Choice Program. This includes;
 - That Guam does not fall under the purview of the Department of Veterans Affairs, Veteran's Choice Program that was signed into law by the President in August 2014 and mandated by the DOVA.
 - The law directs the establishment of a Veterans *Choice Card* benefit that provides a commitment on behalf of this Nation that needed health care services or treatment for Veterans will never again be unreasonably delayed because VA's wait times are over 30 days or if a VA medical facility cannot provide treatment.
- I have requested a VA-OIG investigation against one of my providers because of direct Violation of Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (Public Law 104-191) (HIPAA), and Privacy rights under the (Privacy Act of 1974) that have caused effect of the wrongdoing and Defamation of Character to myself as a disabled veteran.
- When I requested for a change of provider to be assigned to me they could not resented my request and waited over year after compiling complaints that I had filed with the Honolulu Patient Advocate against the Guam CBOC.
- I have issues getting a hold of patient care staff and/or my nurse to address any current issues or to basically get more information regarding follow up with referrals or calls not returned from an automated messenger machine at the Guam CBOC.

- My Primary Care Provider has failed to properly diagnose my military-service connected illnesses/injuries based on their findings, but they recognize to address those findings and diagnose me in their system that was done by the Army and a MD from the Honolulu VA office.

This is the reality of that a disabled combat veterans has to burden for his service and sacrifice to our nation. I don't ask much for treatment or a red carpet service in that manner. All I ask is for the VA to provide me the care to address my needs for my disability and to live a comfortable life, but not to shove pharmaceutical meds down my throat to keep me quiet and hoping that solves the problem. It is such shame that I have to live with the same attitude that was constantly repeated by the Army "Suck it up – And drive on".

Furthermore, Guam is not alone in this matter and is a nationwide concern for the VA. In recent months May 15, 2015 to be exact the VA was called to the Veterans' Affairs of Subcommittee on Health, on the Veterans Affairs Staffing Issues. Although, with great strides that the VA has come from in the past several decades as to where it once stood on the E Wing of the Old Naval Hospital to its heavily fortified compound, I like to recognize an individual Dr. Joan Gil for continuing to stay affirm with the Guam CBOC and providing the Veterans Healthcare of Excellence to myself and many veterans on Guam. I am not about bad mouthing or bashing the VA healthcare system on Guam, but it is what it is and I only hope that the VA can find more doctors like Dr. Gil, and I would like "Thank" her for going beyond the call service for which a system that is manage thousands of miles away in Honolulu that tries its best to provide to Guam.

Finally, with recent flooding of staffing at the clinic as a temporary fix, lets us be caution to how committed is this VA willing to up hold its promise to patient care service to the veterans of Guam and to those veterans who travel here for care. As we see the progress and the attempts of the VA to do what can be done, but the long wait and the challenges have to be assessed on an annual basis if not quartly and should prompt a VA-OIG investigation to underline that of concerns brought forward today. I thank all those here listening to this testimony and applaud your effort to address the needs on veterans on our island.

Very Respectfully,



Rodney A. Cruz Jr., Ret. U.S. Army
Operation Iraqi Freedom Veteran

Monday, June 22, 2015

Mr. Greg Borja
Gulf War Veteran

Honorable Senator
Frank B. Aguon Jr.
The 33rd Guam Legislature
155 Hesler Place, Suite 107
Hagatna, Guam 96910

Subject: Public Hearing; Resolution No. 111-33 (COR) - Relative to requesting Guam's Delegate to the Congress of the United States to call for an investigation from the Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General to substantiate allegations into access barriers adversely affecting the quality of primary and specialty care, and mismanagement at the Veterans Affairs Guam Community Based Outpatient Clinic and the Guam Vet Center.

Hafa Adai,

Thank you Senator Aguon for recognizing my testimony, as a Desert Storm/Gulf War veteran these are my challenges that I have faced with at the Guam VA Clinic CBOC, and to include that my experiences are of not just one vet, but of many other Gulf War veterans on Guam.

The challenges I faced and I know that I am not the only one:

- I had to wait over 6-months regarding my refill for pain meds to help me sleep Nothing was done to help get me an appointment to see a Primary Care Provider (PCP)
- I sent an email to the Patient Advocate and no response.
- I was provided medication to help me sleep due to the pain but, was told that they couldn't issue it to me again.
- I was not offered an alternative to help me sleep but, was told that I had to be seen by a Mental Health Provider regarding my sleep issue.
- I was informed by my PCP that she was told by the Lead PCP Dr. Helene Head not to issue me meds to help me sleep.
- I sent an email requesting an explanation on it and no response was ever given.

This is not about bad mouthing or bashing the VA healthcare system because it is a system that tries its best to provide. It is the issue of holding Primary Care Providers accountable and ensuring the quality of care and standards of care is upheld.

Guam has come a long way with VA Health Care. I remember when it was just Dr. Rudradevi Paramaguru doing it all (Primary Care and Comp/Pension Exams). Then the move to the US Naval Hospital and finally the funding to build a CBOC on Guam...So, I see the progress and the attempts of the VA to do what can be done, but the long wait and the challenges have to be assessed on an annual basis. From the assessments will come actions plans! The key is that the action plans have to be implementing and not just be said. I thank all those here listening to this testimony and applaud your effort to address the needs on veterans on our island.

Respectfully,

/sign/

GAB

MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO
GUAM

ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

RANKING MEMBER, SUBCOMMITTEE ON
READINESS

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
SEAPOWER AND PROJECTION FORCES

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON INDIAN, INSULAR,
AND ALASKA NATIVE AFFAIRS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER, POWER AND OCEANS



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

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<http://www.house.gov/bordallo>

June 22, 2015

The Honorable Frank Blas Aguon Jr.
120 Father Dueñas Avenue Suite 107
Hagatña, GU 96910

Dear Senator Aguon,

Thank you for your leadership on Veterans' issues and for this hearing on Resolution 111-33. While we have made significant progress on Veterans' issues, we have much more work ahead of us. We cannot be satisfied with the status quo and we must all work together so that each and every Veteran receives the health care and benefits that they are entitled to.

I appreciate your resolution, Res. 111-33, which requests my assistance in addressing access barriers that our Veterans are experiencing at the Guam Community Based Outpatient Clinic. In addition, the resolution raises the specific case wherein a suicide may have occurred due to inadequate care being provided to a veteran. A resolution from the Guam Legislature would provide me with the factual basis to initiate an inquiry with the Department of Veterans Affairs' Office of Inspector General regarding the specific case in question and any improprieties that may have occurred. I look forward to reading the full text of the resolution and to addressing the issues that are raised in the resolution.

Should you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact my district director, Jon Calvo, at Jon.Calvo@mail.house.gov or at 671-477-4272.

Sincerely,


MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO
Member of Congress

Monday, June 22, 2015

Honorable Senator
Frank B. Aguon Jr.
The 33rd Guam Legislature
155 Hesler Place, Suite 107
Hagatna, Guam 96910

Subject: Testimony on Department of Veterans Affairs Guam Healthcare System (VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC)), Public Hearing Resolution No. 111-33 (COR) – Relative to requesting Guam’s Delegate to the Congress of the United States to call for an investigation from the Veteran’s Office of Inspector General to substantiate allegations into access barriers adversely the quality of primary and specialty care, and mismanagement at the Veterans Affairs Guam Community Based Outpatient Clinic and the Guam Vet Center.

Hafa Adai,

Thank you Senator Aguon for recognizing my testimony, as spouse and caregiver of a veteran whom faces many challenges and experiences with the Guam VA Clinic CBOC.

The challenges I have as a caregiver are as follows:

- The wait for referrals to specialty care for my disabled husband
- Receiving medication from off-island which came untimely and was from Arizona instead of Hawaii.
- Making an appointment with CBOC due to the shortage of providers
- Inconsistent treatment plans due to the constant change in providers and shortage of providers
- Inability to use the VA Choice Card under the Veteran’s Choice Program to seek outside care.
- Violation of my husband’s privacy rights
- Delayed patient care services, i.e. new mental health consult when requested by my husband
- Inability to communicate with clinic to address my concerns with the care being provided to my husband.
- Unable to leave voice messages to patient care staff or provider due to voicemail system.
- Inconsistent medications are given to treat severe chronic pain and other health issues.
- Delayed diagnosis although other specialty providers recognized the symptoms to diagnose my husband in result to his military-service connected illness/injuries.

Thank you for accepting my testimony on behalf of my husband, a disabled combat veteran, Operation Iraqi Freedom and your efforts to address the issue.

v/r,



Ashley A. Cruz

I am Enrique Agustin a combat veteran of the Vietnam War.

Our Mission in the Infantry is to close with and destroy the enemy.

I am not proud to say that killing another human being in the name of political ideology is justifiable.

I was only a teenager when this life altering event took place and it has haunted me for over 50 years.

For those of us who suffers from PTSD or have love ones with PTSD commit suicide because of lack of adequate care is a terrible thing. I have relatives and friends who have died as a result of their war experience.

As a community with a high percentage of veterans, we have not done enough to care for the veterans and their families. What we have done enough is to complain and to continue to complain and now move our complaints to the next higher level by going the route of addressing our concerns with the veteran administration's Inspector General Office.

Is complaining enough? Does complaining accomplish anything? Are we just complaining in general or do we have specific issues that have been collected and separated into categories to insure that when the Inspector general team come to Guam that we honed in on the real issues facing our community.

Do we have the right head count of the number of veterans living in Guam. Why do other territories like Puerto Rico and Virgin Island have their numbers correctly identified to the VA. Why is Guam different?

If the amount of VA monies allocated to the various states and territories is based on head count, why doesn't Guam have this data by now?

For many years the Veteran Administration have paid consulting firms to come up with data for each state and territory. Do we have to hire consultants? Do we have the money locally to adequately conduct a survey to assess the right head count? Is the Guam Veteran Commission adequately funded by our local government to conduct such a study? Why is the Guam veteran commission responsible for the conduct of the survey and where is the money to take care of the cost for this survey?

As a member of the house armed-services committee, will our congressional delegate demand that the Veteran Administration provide Guam with the most updated data of the number of veterans residing in Guam.

Can she require that the Defense finance and accounting service (DFAS) provide some data.

Can she require that the Veteran Hospital Administration (VHA) provide some data.

Can she require that the Veteran Benefit Administration (VBA) provide some data.

How can the Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army help us with the issues we have as a community.

Yes, Guam has a civilian aide to the Secretary of the Army. Do you know that Veterans are the best military recruiters for our Nation. Veterans directly influence our young men and women whether to join the military or not. What happens when our country does not take care of our veterans? Is the civilian aide concern of this potential problem?

When we are able to get the data we need from the various source mentioned above, can we not then make a logical assessment of the number of veterans living in Guam and then have this data vetted by the Veteran Administration so we can get our fair share of funding for our veteran community.

When we have these numbers, then we will see our fair share of resources be put to bear on the problems and challenges we have as a community.

Are we just going to complain without first correctly identifying the cause of our problem and not merely addressing the symptoms.

We can do better, as currently written, I do not support the resolution being presented here today, we need to be more specific as to the problem we are encountering before I support the resolution.



Office of Senator Frank B. Aguon, Jr. <admin@frankaguonjr.com>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Senator Aguon clarifies status of the Primary Care Providers at the Guam Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC)

juan finona <juan_finona@yahoo.com>

Wed, May 27, 2015 at 9:23 AM

Reply-To: juan finona <juan_finona@yahoo.com>

To: "Office of Senator Frank Aguon, Jr. Admin" <admin@frankaguonjr.com>

please be advise that the object of the veterans affairs is to discourage veterans from getting the entitlement they deserve and that it is not only Honolulu that is playing with the veterans but also the people at the guam veterans clinic. most of them are not doing what they are being paid to do. the veterans and their spouses are being schaffed for health treatments. I resently returned from long beach veterans hospital, where my wife had her mammogram, bone density and lab work done on the same day she was interviewed, and had the following day appointment made to see the doctor. here you wait for veterans affairs Honolulu for approval which takes anywhere from one to three months, and then the staff at guam veterans clinic will not contact you, unless you make the follow up.

[Quoted text hidden]



IRAQ-AFGHANISTAN AND PERSIAN GULF VETERANS OF THE PACIFIC

Pacific Island HQ, A Sole Regional Organization
222 Chalan Santo Papa * Reflection Center, Suite 201, Hagatna, Guam 96910



Rodney A Cruz Jr., Founder/President **Greg Borja**, Vice President **Ashley Cruz**, Secretary

Melinda Quichocho, Treasurer **Victor Fernandez**, Sergeant at Arms **Joleen Castro**, Public Information Officer

May 21, 2015

Tax ID (66-0816363)

The Honorable, Senator Frank B. Aguon Jr.
155 Hesler Place
Hagatna, Guam 96910

Re: Recognition in creating a bill that would support the Clay Hunt SAV act that would support our veterans services on Guam.

Dear Senator Aguon,

On behalf of the Iraq-Afghanistan and Persian Gulf Veterans of the Pacific (IAPGVP), I, Rodney Cruz Jr., serve as the Founder/President for the veterans' non-profit sole regional organization on Guam. I am writing to express in concern of the state that the Guam VA Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) and the Guam Vet Center Readjustment Counseling Office has failed to uphold its promise in providing quality care to our island veterans.

We are deeply troubled by reports that veterans at the Guam, VA Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) continue to receive questionable care. It is disturbing to hear veterans and individuals working at the Guam CBOC describe the medical center as "a system that's been overlooked and under supported." Provided that the Hawaii VA leadership has failed to provide adequate reliable doctors for Guam for our veterans. Nothing is more important than ensuring that our men and women in uniform receive high quality care.

Introduced in the House of Armed Services; Veterans' Affairs by Congressmen Tim Walz, the Clay Hunt SAV Act would require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs (VA) to arrange for an independent third party evaluation, at least annually, of the VA's mental health care and suicide prevention programs (Sec.2) to include to establish a three-year pilot program at not less than five Veterans Integrated Service Networks to assist veterans transitioning from active duty and to improve the access of veterans to mental health services (Sec. 5).

In May 2015, an Afghanistan combat disabled veteran "Sgt. Paul Moore" had taken his own life, a veteran who was diagnose with severe Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) with Alcohol Dependence. Through which Mr. Moore and his family who numerously had asked for "HELP" from the VA was denied proper treatment or allowed to be referred to an impatient recovery program in Hawaii. These initial allegations were administratively received by the Secretary of VA, Mr. Bob McDonald and we understand the following actions were brought to the attention of the facility director Mr. Pfeffer at Honolulu VA Pacific Islands Healthcare System and VISN management.



IRAQ-AFGHANISTAN AND PERSIAN GULF VETERANS OF THE PACIFIC

Pacific Island HQ, A Sole Regional Organization
222 Chalan Santo Papa * Reflection Center, Suite 201, Hagatna, Guam 96910



Rodney A Cruz Jr., Founder/President **Greg Borja**, Vice President **Ashley Cruz**, Secretary

Meilinda Quichocho, Treasurer **Victor Fernandez**, Sergeant at Arms **Joleen Castro**, Public Information Officer

It is concerning that even prior to the notification of these issues in which the state of the Guam CBOC and the Guam Vet Center is currently operating at, similar allegations and problems continue at the Guam CBOC. Due to the recent concerns raised, we request that your office conduct a comprehensive investigation of the Guam CBOC and Guam Vet Center, and to include a VA-OIG to address these concerns.

Lastly, we are asking for your support to recognize the Clay Hunt SAV act, and that we can work together to create a bill in reference to the Clay Hunt SAV act to accommodate such services and programs for our veterans transitioning from Active Duty, Reserves, and National Guard. The value of the need will help our younger generation of veterans who currently serve a large percentage in our government agencies and private firms. We would like to acknowledge this new bill as the "Paul Moore Act", in memory of a GPD Officer Paul Moore who was a veteran in distress.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. I look forward to working with your office on these issues.

Sincerely,

Rodney A. Cruz Jr.

Rodney A. Cruz Jr.,

Founder/President, Iraq Afghanistan and Persian Gulf Veterans of the Pacific



IRAQ-AFGHANISTAN AND PERSIAN GULF VETERANS OF THE PACIFIC

Pacific Island HQ, A Sole Regional Organization
222 Chalan Santo Papa * Reflection Center, Suite 201, Hagatna, Guam 96910



Rodney A Cruz Jr., Founder/President **Greg Borja**, Vice President **Ashley Cruz**, Secretary

Melinda Quichocho, Treasurer **Victor Fernandez**, Sergeant at Arms **Joleen Castro**, Public Information Officer

May 20, 2015

Tax ID (66-0816363)

The Honorable Congresswomen
Madeleine Z. Bordallo
120 Father Duenas Avenue, Suite 107
Hagatna, Guam 96910

Re: Department of Veterans Affairs, Healthcare service (Guam)

Dear Congresswomen,

On behalf of the Iraq-Afghanistan and Persian Gulf Veterans of the Pacific (IAPGVP), I, Rodney Cruz Jr., serve as the Founder/President for the veterans' non-profit sole regional organization on Guam. I am writing to express in support for Mr. Bill Cundiff's letter to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in concern of the state that the Guam VA Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) and the Guam Vet Center Readjustment Counseling Office has failed to uphold its promise in providing quality care to our island veterans.

We are deeply troubled by reports that veterans at the Guam, VA Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) continue to receive questionable care. It is disturbing to hear veterans and individuals working at the Guam CBOC describe the medical center as "a system that's been overlooked and under supported." Provided that the Hawaii VA leadership has failed to provide adequate reliable doctors for Guam and Northern Marianas Islands. Specifically, some veterans label the Guam CBOC as a "Prison" due to the nature of its structure in comparison to all other VA Health Center nationwide. Nothing is more important than ensuring that our men and women in uniform receive high quality care.

Introduced in the House of Armed Services; Veterans' Affairs by Congressmen Tim Walz, the Clay Hunt SAV Act would require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs (VA) to arrange for an independent third party evaluation, at least annually, of the VA's mental health care and suicide prevention programs (Sec.2) to include to establish a three-year pilot program at not less than five Veterans Integrated Service Networks to assist veterans transitioning from active duty and to improve the access of veterans to mental health services (Sec. 5).

In May 2015, an Afghanistan combat disabled veteran had taken his life, who was diagnose with severe Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) with Alcohol Dependence. A veteran and his family who numerously had asked for "HELP" from the VA was denied proper treatment. These initial allegations were administratively received by the Secretary of VA, Mr.



IRAQ-AFGHANISTAN AND PERSIAN GULF VETERANS OF THE PACIFIC

Pacific Island HQ, A Sole Regional Organization
222 Chalan Santo Papa * Reflection Center, Suite 201, Hagatna, Guam 96910



Rodney A Cruz Jr., Founder/President **Greg Borja**, Vice President **Ashley Cruz**, Secretary

Melinda Gulchocho, Treasurer **Victor Fernandez**, Sergeant at Arms **Joleen Castro**, Public Information Officer

Bob McDonald and we understand the following actions were brought to the attention of the facility director Mr. Pfeffer at Honolulu VA Pacific Islands Healthcare System and VISN management.

It is concerning that even prior to the notification of these issues in which the state of the Guam CBOC and the Guam Vet Center is currently operating at, similar allegations and problems continue at the Guam CBOC. Due to the recent concerns raised, we request that your office conduct a comprehensive investigation of the Guam CBOC and Guam Vet Center, and to include a VA-OIG to address these concerns.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. I look forward to working with your office on these issues.

Sincerely,

Rodney A. Cruz Jr.,
Founder/President, Iraq Afghanistan and Persian Gulf Veterans of the Pacific



Office of Senator Frank B. Aguon, Jr. <admin@frankaguonjr.com>

Request for Assistance

bill cundiff <afcmstg24@yahoo.com>

Tue, May 12, 2015 at 9:07 AM

Reply-To: bill cundiff <afcmstg24@yahoo.com>

To: "Bob.mcdonald@va.gov" <Bob.mcdonald@va.gov>

Cc: Thomas Ada <tom@senatorada.org>, Frank Aguon Jr <aguon4guam@gmail.com>, "Helene H. Head" <helene.head2@va.gov>, "Bernadette S. Santos" <bernadette.santos@va.gov>, Madeleine Bordallo <madeleine.bordallo@mail.house.gov>, Diron Cruz <diron.cruz@hotmail.com>, Benjamin Palacios <benpalacio@aol.com>

Hafa adai (hello) Mr. Secretary,

I am writing in frustration and desperation because our veterans in Guam aren't getting the services they've earned and deserve.

Ever since our CBOC opened a few years ago, primary care doctors begin bailing out before they get fully acclimated. This is an unpardonable trend. Effective June 1st, CBOC will be down to one primary care doctor again. There may be no primary care doctor by that time.

As a result, appointments are being delayed over and over again. Delays can and will exacerbate the health problems of our veterans.

They are very frustrated and have a very apprehensive emotional state of mind. They don't trust CBOC.

A veteran who took his life was buried last Saturday. His family felt that he wasn't given the sense of urgency treatment by CBOC and the Vet Center. Without fail, this incident must be inspected by the VA IG immediately.

CBOC personnel are frustrated as well. They've been working in cramped spaces for years. Beside their current location, other VA offices are at two other separate locations. I understand that \$5.5 million has been approved to improve the space of CBOC. I am not sure of start and completion dates. Should we reach our goal of getting 12000 veterans registered in the VA system, this space improvement may not be able to handle to load.

The Choice Card program isn't close to being implemented here. And I don't understand why those with choice cards have to register at CBOC again.

The Hawaii VA leadership has put forth solutions to the retention problem, but after years, the problem hasn't been resolved. It appears that pay itself isn't so much of a problem since primary care doctors accepted their positions prior to coming to Guam.

One possible solution is for the VA to partner with our local state of the art hospital scheduled to open soon, much like the VA and the Army Tripler Medical Center partnership in Hawaii. Our veterans can receive quick services and they don't have to be sent to Hawaii for specialized care. VA will save a huge sum of money on travel costs, hotel expenses, and other expenses associated with travel and patient care. The partnership can be a win-win solution.

I am requesting your intervention to help resolve the retention problem of primary care doctors. I am also requesting that the VA Inspector General inspect the Hawaii VA leadership in respect to the services, policies, procedures, and treatment of our veterans in Guam. Request the IG also inspect all Guam offices who provide services to our veterans and their families. If the results aren't classified,

request results be published in Guam newspapers.

From all your press releases, I gather that rebuilding the confidence of our veterans and their families through outstanding services is your main frame.

Thanks for your consideration and time, Mr. Secretary. I hope to hear from you soon.

With all my respect,

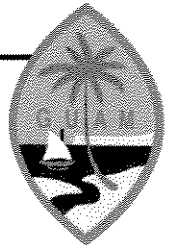
Bill Cundiff
Chairman, Guam Veterans Commission
Home phone: (671) 565-4561
Cell Phone: (671) 482-1028



COMMITTEE ON

Guam U.S Military Relocation | Public Safety | Judiciary

I MINA' TRENTAI TRES NA LIHESLATURAN GUAHAN | 33RD GUAM LEGISLATURE



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Senator
Brant T. McCreadie
Member

Speaker
Dr. Judith T. Won Pat, Ed.D.
Ex-Officio

Additional Documents

SUITE 503, DNA BLDG. 238 ARCHBISHOP FLORES STREET HAGATNA, GUAM 96910
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Office of Senator Frank B. Aguon, Jr. <admin@frankaguonjr.com>

NEWS: Bordallo Addresses VA Decision Granting Benefits to Air Force Veterans Exposed to Agent Orange

Rodney A. Cruz Jr. <rodneycruzjr@hotmail.com>

Mon, Jun 22, 2015 at 9:44 AM

To: "San Agustin, Rob" <rob.sanagustin@mail.house.gov>

Cc: "Office of Senator Frank Aguon, Jr. Admin" <admin@frankaguonjr.com>, bill cundiff <afcmst24@yahoo.com>, IAPGVP Guam <iapgvp@gmail.com>, "dmendiola@teleguam.net" <dmendiola@teleguam.net>, Joleen Castro <k57vettalk@gmail.com>

Hafa Adai yan buenas,

Mr. San Agustin, will the Congresswomen be helping our Vietnam Veterans on Guam who have been constantly denied their VA Benefits Compensation due to service connected exposure to Agent Orange.

I have assisted over 20 plus Vietnam Veterans and it would be greatly appreciated that the Congresswomen can assist with the process and advocate that our Veterans on Guam are no different than those in the continental of the United States, and it is sad that because of our sole location and status Guam Veterans have to deal with the bureaucracy of the Department of Veterans Affairs Benefits Regional Office in Honolulu. Given that history reveals off negligence on the Department of Veterans Affairs, that a supervisor at the Veterans Administration office in Honolulu was manipulating data to make it look like the agency was processing veterans' benefits claims faster it actually was, according to a new report by the VA Office of Inspector General.

The Hawaii investigation was originally prompted by the Honolulu VA Regional Office, which asked the inspectors to review 147 cases from April through August 2014 in which it was believed the supervisor had removed the controls used to track claims. The inspectors reviewed 139 of those — because the others were located at a different facility — and found that the supervisor inappropriately manipulated the records in 100 of the cases, a rate of about 72 percent. Given that the director of VA Benefits, Tracey A. Betts had not been fired and was transferred to the VA Regional Office in Florida, as to her supervisor was release from the VA.

In my request, I am requesting that the Congresswomen look into these matters that have affected our Vietnam Veterans on Guam in recent years in regards to Benefit Claims for Compensation and Pension.

As a leader amongst our veterans' service organization I would like to see that the Congresswomen advocate for the need of:

1. Requesting that a Decision Review Officer (DRO) be assign to Guam to assist with the proper processing of claims submitted.
2. Provide that her office provides assistance to all (Vietnam Veterans) who may have been denied such benefit claim for compensation & pension in respects to exposure to Agent Orange or any other herbicides used during the Vietnam War and the affects to immediate family through birth.

Thank you for your time in helping us fulfills our commitments to our service members and their families. Please work to ensure their future success as they are not just recognized for their service and sacrifice, but as well are given their righteous benefits.

Sincerely,

/sign/

Rodney A. Cruz Jr.,

Founder/President, Iraq Afghanistan and Persian Gulf Veterans of the Pacific

From: Rob.SanAgustin@mail.house.gov
To: Rob.SanAgustin@mail.house.gov
Subject: FW: NEWS: Bordallo Addresses VA Decision Granting Benefits to Air Force Veterans Exposed to Agent Orange
Date: Sun, 21 Jun 2015 23:03:14 +0000

Hafa Adai veterans,

I am forwarding a press release from our office. The links provided can be used to read more about eligibility and benefits regarding exposure to agent orange. Thank you all and a belated Happy Father's day to whom it applies. Have a great week!

Respectfully,

Rob San Agustin

District Office of Congresswoman Madeleine Bordallo

120 Father Duenas Ave, Ste 107, Hagatna, GU 96910

P: (671) 477-4272 | F: (671) 477-2587

CONNECT: WEBSITE | FACEBOOK | YOUTUBE

News from Congresswoman Madeleine Z. Bordallo

[Quoted text hidden]



Office of Senator Frank B. Aguon, Jr. <admin@frankaguonjr.com>

WILL NOT SEND EMAIL: Respect For Request

Rodney A. Cruz Jr. <rodneycruzjr@hotmail.com>

Tue, May 26, 2015 at 12:03 PM

To: Peter Sgro <psgro@dpacguam.com>, Barry Mead <bigb@teleguam.net>

Cc: "Alan G. Van Aken" <agunner77@teleguam.net>, Dan Perez <danperez671@gmail.com>, Brian Merenda <bjmerenda@yahoo.com>, Al Parke <ttsguam@hotmail.com>, John Rivera <jgrivera1949@ymail.com>, Joseph San Nicolas <joe_kamudo@yahoo.com>, Joleen Certeza <jacerteza@yahoo.com>, Juan Finona <juan_finona@yahoo.com>, "M. Mendiola" <mmendiola159@gmail.com>, "cil_m@hotmail.com" <cil_m@hotmail.com>, Cindy Gogo <cindy.gogo@gvao.guam.gov>, 고흥식 <stanstw@hotmail.com>, "Santos, Edward L." <edward.santos2@va.gov>, sarah thomas nededog <sarahtn56@gmail.com>, Frank Nededog Salas <goagat@yahoo.com>, Jesse Salas <jesse.salas@fe.navy.mil>, "jesse.fredericksen@va.gov" <jesse.fredericksen@va.gov>, Joaquin Santos Jr <joaquin.santosjr@yahoo.com>, Alex Rhowuniong <production@joyfmradio.net>, Leslie San Nicolas <napujames53@yahoo.com>, "Helene H. Head" <helene.head2@va.gov>, John Blas <john.blas@westcare.com>, John Taitano <jnbatulai@guam.net>, Joseph Foster <fosterjoseph@hotmail.com>, Marlene Slomka <marlene.slomkams@gmail.com>, Benjamin palacios <benpalacio@aol.com>, Diron Cruz <diron.cruz@hotmail.com>, Rick Cruz <richardcruz@teleguam.net>, Richard Taitague <richard.taitague.ctr@fe.navy.mil>, "mophtd@ite.net" <mophtd@ite.net>, John Unpingco <john.unpingco@gvao.guam.gov>, "norma.castillon@gmail.com" <norma.castillon@gmail.com>, Tommy Charfauros <tomas.charfauros@gmail.com>, "Lester L. VBAHONO Stahl" <lester.stahl@va.gov>, Tom Ada <tom@senatorada.org>, Frank Aguon <aguon4guam@gmail.com>, "Office of Senator Frank Aguon, Jr. Admin" <admin@frankaguonjr.com>, Thomas Morrison <tommy@senatormorrison.com>, Aline Yamashita <aline4families@gmail.com>, "Duane M. George" <dmgeorge@guampdn.com>, RBC <richard@eliteprintingpacific.com>, "Jay R. Merrill" <jmerrill@guam.net>

Dear Mr. Sgro,

On behalf of the Iraq-Afghanistan and Persian Gulf Veterans of the Pacific (IAPGVP), I, Rodney Cruz Jr., serve as the Founder/President for the veterans' non-profit sole regional organization on Guam. I am writing to express my concern for not sending your letter forward in concern of the state that the Guam VA Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) and the VA services it renders to our island veterans. Through which has failed to uphold its promise in providing quality care to our island veterans.

I feel I must write to confirm that in my opinion having not sending forward with your letter, has affected the confidence on your purpose to challenge the VA in regards to its commitment to our island veterans on Guam in providing inadequate service and care. In respect to honoring the request of a fellow veteran in not sending it forward, is one veteran vs. a community of veterans and veteran leaders who represent veterans who've come to support you and your council in bringing forth a VA Hospital.

We are deeply troubled by reports that veterans at the Guam, VA Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) continue to receive questionable care. It is disturbing to hear veterans and individuals working at the Guam CBOC describe the medical center as "a system that's been overlooked and under supported." Provided that the Hawaii VA leadership has failed to provide adequate reliable doctors for Guam and Northern Marianas Islands. Nothing is more important than ensuring that our men and women in uniform receive high quality

care.

In the mist of your previous conversation with the VA (Craig Oswald), it was very clear that the VA has no position in supporting our community in light of providing additional services that would define a state of the art first class treatment to our island veterans. As some may know that Mr. Oswald has been a fraction of the issue that presents the concerns of the VA Healthcare program on Guam. As I may recall in a documentary filming Maria Hinojosa had stated to Mr. Oswald, "Everything seems to look great, great facility, but the story does not jive with a veteran. The story does not line up with what we would expect." Mr. Oswald in response, "It does not line up with what I expect either". (Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ALu5_mjtJkA)

It is concerning that even prior to the notification of these issues in which the state of the Guam CBOC is currently operating at, similar allegations and problems continue at the Guam CBOC. With that being said, Mr. Sgro, I would like to draw your attention to numbers, and that having the purpose of presenting this issue has been long overdue in providing adequate staffing and care to our island by the Department of Veterans Affairs. In result that the VA censurable to the death of a veteran and inadequate service that lead up to the resignation of Primary Care doctors at the Guam VA Clinic with a population of veterans on Guam 27,516 veterans as reported by former director John Unpingco from the Veterans Affairs State Office in Asan. Due to the recent concerns raised, talking about numbers that the 27,516 is only a fraction of veterans to account for and that no one has talked about the thousands of other veterans that include (Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), Freely Associated States (FAS), Federates States of Micronesia (FSM), and those veterans who travel for the Philippines and Mainland for continued care at the Guam VA Outpatient Clinic.

It is imperative that VA in Honolulu needs to adhere to the (The Veteran Choice Program is part of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (VACAA)) which was passed by Congress and implemented by Department of Veterans Affairs to begin as of November 5, 2014. The Veteran Choice Program authorizes care for certain veterans at non-VA facilities through Aug. 7, 2017, or until the \$10 billion Veterans Choice Fund is exhausted. It is upsetting that the officials from PIHCS and VISN 21 have delayed the process and is less to be more proactive in insuring that such private Medical vendors on Guam are recognize and available to access of care for our veterans residing on Guam.

Which concludes to my testimony that to qualify as an eligible non-VA facility, hospitals must participate in the Medicare program, be "accessible" as defined by the VA, and enter into an agreement with the VA. As an operational matter, VA will use existing sharing agreements, existing contracts, and other processes available at VA medical facilities prior to using provider agreements under the new program. Providers who are also VA employees cannot be acting within the scope of such employment while providing hospital care or medical services through the program.

The rule creates a claims processing system managed by the Veterans Health Administration's Chief Business Office. VA will only pay for hospital care or medical services authorized by VA. In general, payment will be a negotiated rate set forth in the agreement between the VA and the non-VA provider, not to exceed the applicable Medicare rate except in defined "highly rural" areas. Non-VA providers are responsible for first billing any veteran's private healthcare plan, if the care provided is related to a nonservice-connected disability.

VA will notify eligible veterans of the scope of the authorization for care by non-VA providers. Only recently discharged combat veterans or veterans enrolled in the VA health care system by Aug. 1 are eligible. Veterans who reside more than 40 miles from the nearest VA medical center, including VA community-based outpatient clinics, may start receiving non-VA care starting Nov. 4. Veterans who are unable to schedule an appointment within the VA system within 30 days may start receiving non-VA care no later than Dec. 5, 2014.

Lastly, officials from PIHCS and VISN 21 have failed to be transparent and inadequately acted to the concern in which the State of the Guam VA Community Outpatient Based Clinic (CBOC) has performed at its level. This is why we veterans support your mission on a veteran's hospital and you sometimes you have to advocate as that who is not a veteran to ensure that righteous is done as it was your vision giving back to our veteran community.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. I look forward to working with your team on these issues.

Respectfully,

Rodney A. Cruz Jr.,
Founder/President, Iraq Afghanistan and Persian Gulf Veterans of the Pacific

From: psgro@dpacguam.com
To: bigb@teleguam.net
CC: agunner77@teleguam.net; danperez671@gmail.com; bjmerenda@yahoo.com; ttsguam@hotmail.com; jgrivera1949@ymail.com; joe_kamudo@yahoo.com; jacerteza@yahoo.com; juan_finona@yahoo.com; mmendiola159@gmail.com; cil_m@hotmail.com; cindy.gogo@gvao.guam.gov; stanstw@hotmail.com; edward.santos2@va.gov; sarahin56@gmail.com; googat@yahoo.com; jesse.salas@fe.navy.mil; jesse.fredericksen@va.gov; joaquin.santosjr@yahoo.com; production@joyfmradio.net; napujames53@yahoo.com; helene.head2@va.gov; john.blas@westcare.com; jnbatulai@guam.net; fosterjoseph@hotmail.com; marlene.slomkams@gmail.com; benpalacio@aol.com; diron.cruz@hotmail.com; richardcruz@teleguam.net; richard.taitague.ctr@fe.navy.mil; mophtd@ite.net; john.unpingco@gvao.guam.gov; rodneycruzjr@hotmail.com; norma.castillon@gmail.com; tomas.charfauros@gmail.com; lester.stahli@va.gov; tom@senatorada.org; aguon4guam@gmail.com; admin@frankaguonjr.com; tommy@senatormorrison.com; aline4families@gmail.com; dmgeorge@guampdn.com; richard@eliteprintingpacific.com; Jmerrill@guam.net
Subject: Re: WILL NOT SEND EMAIL: Respect For Request

5/26/2015

Office of Senator Frank B. Aguon, Jr. Mail - WILL NOT SEND EMAIL: Respect For Request

Date: Mon, 25 May 2015 15:15:53 +0000

[Quoted text hidden]



Office of Senator Frank B. Aguon, Jr. <admin@frankaguonjr.com>

GUAM VETERANS HEALTHCARE: Response to Director of VA Pacific Islands Healthcare System Email Dated Wednesday, May 27, 2015 at 3:46 AM

Peter Sgro <psgro@dpacguam.com>

Fri, May 29, 2015 at 8:58 AM

To: "Pfeffer, Wayne L." <Wayne.Pfeffer@va.gov>, "Oswald, Craig R." <Craig.Oswald@va.gov>, "thomas.driskil@va.gov" <thomas.driskil@va.gov>

Cc: Richard Cruz <richard.billett.cruz@gmail.com>, "Jay R. Merrill" <Jmerrill@guam.net>, "juanoblaz@gmail.com" <juanoblaz@gmail.com>, Shelly Santos <shellylynsantos@gmail.com>, Barry Mead <bigb@teleguam.net>, "Ady, Mike" <mike@m80systems.com>, Lee Webber <Lee@mdaguam.com>, William Ray Gibson <breakfastshowk57@gmail.com>, Gina Ramos <gramos@calvos.com>, "Franklin P. Arriola" <franklin.arriola@guam.gov>, Patricia Taimanglo <patricia.taimanglo@gmail.com>, Risha Aguon <rmaguon.imft@gmail.com>, "greglizama@gmail.com" <greglizama@gmail.com>, Nathaniel Berg <nberg@guamradiology.com>, Hoa Van Nguyen <hoavannguyen@yahoo.com>, Hieu Campus <hieu.campus@hotmail.com>, Maureen Maratita <publisher@glimpesofguam.com>, "George, Duane M" <dmgeorge@guam.gannett.com>, Carlos V Camacho <ironwoodhousing@gmail.com>, "mcruziii@guampdn.com" <mcruziii@guampdn.com>, Cesar Cabot <cc@cmlaw.us>, "Mark.calvo@guam.gov" <Mark.calvo@guam.gov>, "john.j.whitt@mail.house.gov" <john.j.whitt@mail.house.gov>, Edward Untalan <euntalan@fhhb.com>, Jacqueline Sablan <jacquelinesablan@gmail.com>, Safa <drssafa@gmail.com>, Eveline Campus <evzee@hotmail.com>, John Setiadi Tan <j.setiadi@setiadiarchitects.com>, Joleen Certeza <jacerteza@yahoo.com>, Benjamin Cruz <senadotbjcruz@gmail.com>, Senator Tommy Morrison <tommy=senatormorrison.com@mail25.atl71.mcdlv.net>, "Cruz III, Manuel" <mcruziii@guam.gannett.com>, "Alan G. Van Aken" <agunner77@teleguam.net>, Dan Perez <danperez671@gmail.com>, Brian Merenda <bjmerenda@yahoo.com>, Al Parke <ttsguam@hotmail.com>, John Rivera <jgrivera1949@ymail.com>, Joseph San Nicolas <joe_kamudo@yahoo.com>, Juan Finona <juan_finona@yahoo.com>, "M. Mendiola" <mmendiola159@gmail.com>, "cil_m@hotmail.com" <cil_m@hotmail.com>, Cindy Gogo <cindy.gogo@gvao.guam.gov>, "Edward L. Santos" <edward.santos2@va.gov>, Sarah Mv Thomas Nededog <sarahtn56@gmail.com>, Frank Nededog Salas <goagat@yahoo.com>, Jesse Salas <jesse.salas@fe.navy.mil>, "jesse.fredericksen@va.gov" <jesse.fredericksen@va.gov>, Joaquin Santos Jr <joaquin.santosjr@yahoo.com>, Alex Rhowuniong <production@joyfmradio.net>, Leslie San Nicolas <napujames53@yahoo.com>, "Helene H. Head" <helene.head2@va.gov>, John Blas <john.blas@westcare.com>, John Taitano <jnbatulai@guam.net>, Joseph Foster <fosterjoseph@hotmail.com>, Marlene Slomka <marlene.slomkams@gmail.com>, Diron Cruz <diron.cruz@hotmail.com>, Rick Cruz <richardcruz@teleguam.net>, Richard Taitague <richard.taitague.ctr@fe.navy.mil>, "mophtd@ite.net" <mophtd@ite.net>, John Unpingco <john.unpingco@gvao.guam.gov>, "Rodney A. Cruz Jr." <rodneycruzjr@hotmail.com>, "norma.castillon@gmail.com" <norma.castillon@gmail.com>, Tommy Charfauros <tomas.charfauros@gmail.com>, "Lester L. VBAHONO Stahl" <lester.stahl@va.gov>, Tom Ada <tom@senatorada.org>, "Jr. Admin Office of Senator Frank Aguon" <admin@frankaguonjr.com>, Aline Yamashita <aline4families@gmail.com>, Frank Whitman <frank@mvguam.com>, "news@k57.com" <news@k57.com>, "senator@senatorbjcruz.com" <senator@senatorbjcruz.com>, "senator@tinamunabames.com" <senator@tinamunabames.com>, "roryforguam@gmail.com" <roryforguam@gmail.com>, "office@senatorada.org" <office@senatorada.org>, "aguon4guam@gmail.com" <aguon4guam@gmail.com>, "senatordrodriguez@gmail.com" <senatordrodriguez@gmail.com>, "senatorsannicolas@gmail.com" <senatorsannicolas@gmail.com>, "senatorunderwood@guamlegislature.org" <senatorunderwood@guamlegislature.org>, "senatortonyada@guamlegislature.org" <senatortonyada@guamlegislature.org>, "marycamachotorres@gmail.com" <marycamachotorres@gmail.com>, "frank.blasjr@gmail.com" <frank.blasjr@gmail.com>, "brantforguam@gmail.com" <brantforguam@gmail.com>, "jespaldonesq@gmail.com" <jespaldonesq@gmail.com>, "info@futuromediagroup.org" <info@futuromediagroup.org>, "Crisostomo, David (dcrisost@guam.gannett.com)" <dcrisost@guam.gannett.com>, "news@mvguam.com" <news@mvguam.com>, "dcrisostomo@guampdn.com" <dcrisostomo@guampdn.com>, "sabrina@kuam.com" <sabrina@kuam.com>, "Paulino, Benny M MG USARMY (US)" <benny.m.paulino.mil@mail.mil>, "juanoblas@gmail.com" <juanoblas@gmail.com>, John Pangilinan <starsportscard@yahoo.com>, Franklin Arriola <franklin.arriola@gmail.com>, Bobby Shringi <bshringi@moylans.net>, Frank Campillo <fcampillo@calvos.com>, Gerry Perez <geap43@yahoo.com>, Shelly

Gibson <sgibson@ite.net>, Vincent Leon Guerrero <vincent.leonguerrero@guam.gov>, Jackie Hanson <managingeditor@glimpsesofiguam.com>, Ken Leon-Guerrero <kenleonguerrero@yahoo.com>, logan reyes <loganreyes@gmail.com>

Hi Wayne:

Thank you very much for your email below. I appreciate as the Director of VA Pacific Islands Health Care System that you took the time to write this message below to me. I have noted several concerns and positions in your email message below and offer some suggestions to consider as solutions. I have highlighted in Red for reference certain sentences or parts of sentences in your message the suggestions and / or comments address.

Out of courtesy to you, I want to first state the reason for courtesy copying those in this reply. I believe that transparency fosters positive outcomes. Those of us that started working on just a vision for the development of a private hospital on Guam, also believed in transparency. We informed the media and numerous stakeholders throughout this process in our effort to inform the community of our work over several years. This not only kept our community informed but also clarified any information which was not accurate. Transparency also resulted in additional community support we needed because of the magnitude of what we worked at getting developed. I noted one of your concerns is inaccurate information. I touched on this concern and suggested a solution to this as well.

A. The Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention Act Signed into Law by President Obama and It's Purpose:

- As you may know this Act does not apply to Guam but does for all States for reasons that are not clear;
- This law is aimed at reducing military and veteran suicides and improving their access to quality mental health care;
- The Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans Act, or SAV Act, is named after Clay Hunt, a decorated Marine veteran who, upon his return from combat in Iraq and Afghanistan, struggled with post-traumatic stress. Hunt was wounded in Anbar Province and witnessed the combat deaths of close friends and
- Two years after his discharge and after repeated setbacks in his medical care, Hunt took his own life.

Suggestion: Advocate for an Amendment that includes Guam. It would not be difficult to contact our Congresswoman so she can contact the Chairs of various Congressional Committees VA offices in Washington D.C. And say the Director of Health and Human Services for Region 9 whose office is in San Francisco (I can arrange for that meeting).

B. Suggestions for Investigation of Recent Suicide: NOTE—These suggestions are based on a telephone conversation with one in a position to know of information related to this case. The conversation ended with being told "We Lost A Brother." Please note that these suggestions are based on information provided to me during a telephone conversation with one in a position to know events prior to the incident and some time after.

- Personally meet or speak by phone to those familiar with several details of this case. Can I provide your office number to at least one so you can be called to discuss this yourself directly?
- Acquire and review his registration card issued after discharge and all medical records from the date of discharge to the date of the incident;
- Acquire and review all records or any written materials about the cause of death.
- Determine why the letter "D" is often not used in the word "PTSD" and at times referred to as "PTS" and
- Call for an investigation as to delayed responses after Guam Veterans call the Veterans Suicide Hotline. One of their phone numbers is 1-(800)-273-8255

C. Inaccurate Reporting by Guam Media

Suggestion: I am more than happy to provide you with a list of names and contact numbers of the owners of all Guam media, Publisher and Editor of print media and all broadcast media including reports by radio and/or television

D."to ensure we provide the best healthcare we can afford" and "I have authorized several physicians from Honolulu to rotate to Guam to ensure adequate coverage as we recruit.

Wayne, I had sent by email to Craig a list of members and their titles of our Council after the "Guam and Regional Healthcare Council" was formed and before our first meeting. For purposes of accuracy as to the members of our Council, I personally determined the varying expertise of each member. The selection process also included some members with immediate and direct access to various necessary individuals or companies that are able to foster our goals. This includes individuals and /or companies in Honolulu, San Francisco, Seattle, New York and Washington D.C. Our Senior Advisors include the former Secretary of the Navy and former Director of Health and Human Services. Some other members of our Council are doctors that are Veterans and some that first came to Guam to work at the Naval Hospital, Psychologists, Certified expert in Federal New Market Tax Credits and other Federal tax credit programs, the Dean of the University of Guam School of Nursing, financial analyst and an officer of a major bank, representatives of insurance companies that have expertise in providing Federal healthcare insurance policies, an architect and our research expert that focuses for our purposes, information on Veterans healthcare.

Suggestions: Often experts in various fields chosen to do studies, reports on certain subjects, various developments, financing and other work, are brought to Guam from the mainland. There is a perception that they can produce better outcomes than those that were either born and raised on Guam or have spent years of their lives on Guam. In most all of the various industries, Guam maintains within our own community greater expertise in producing better outcomes. In fact, this is the case with even healthcare matters in the region. In fact, when a Federal RFP was issued to do a report that included a healthcare assessment of the Chuuk Hospital, those that wrote the healthcare assessment were residents of Guam that also went to Chuuk to conduct interviews with all hospital staff and government representatives. My colleague that was also a member of the Healthcare Assessment Team, met the Director of Nursing who was a former student of hers when this Director of Nursing attended the University of Guam Nursing School.

- Meet with officers of various businesses on Guam that for various reasons cut cost without adversely affecting providing services to their customers or clients;
- Meet those doctors on Guam that were able to have 100% of their Federal Medical School Loans forgiven by the Federal Government after only working on Guam for four years;
- Review invoices over a 10 year period that are billed to your office that directly relates to Guam and Regional Veterans care, including without limitation payments to the Navy and Air Force
- Begin discussions with the top two Faith Based Healthcare Organizations to provide more doctors and psychiatrists solely for Veteran Care. This was the recommendation we made to the Federal Government in our Health Assessment report for the Chuuk hospital for management operations, maintenance and recruitment of doctors. Cost reduction was one of our reasons since Faith Based Healthcare Organizations that own hospitals and/ or manage hospitals globally seek a rate of return of between 4% to 7%;
- Compare the cost of your current offices at Tripler to smaller and lower cost office space in commercial buildings close to Tripler;
- Determine the the demand for Veteran care in all areas within your jurisdiction and if the demand is not large enough in those jurisdictions for the number of doctors, transfer them to Guam;
- Guam has a Telemedicine Act which three members of the Foundation I chaired when it was active, wrote the entire Telemedicine law. Utilize grants issued by the Guam office of the Rural Development section of the Department of Agriculture. The Director who was a member of the Foundation I founded is still the Director of this office. Born on Guam, he first worked for the department office in Honolulu. He is allocated

enough grant funds for Telemedicine that does not get used.

- Utilize and have developed software for IT systems that allow Guam and Regional Veterans to be processed for VA healthcare benefits in less than 24 hours right here on Guam rather than wait sometimes for several weeks to be processed in Honolulu. This results if the right IT system including software to lower costs and make it virtually impossible to have data lost.

APPEARANCE OF AT LEAST A 17 MONTH DELAY BEFORE IMPLEMENTATION OF CHOICE PROGRAM FOR GUAM VETERANS: According to information on the Choice Program contained in the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs website at <http://www.va.gov/opa/choiceact/>, the effective date of the program is referenced by the following sentence—*“Beginning November 5, 2014, the new Choice Program will begin to cover non-VA care for eligible Veterans enrolled in VA healthcare.”* Below this statement are several eligibility requirements but it states that if any one of them does apply to a Veteran, then that Veteran is eligible for the program. Based on one of the sentences contained in your May 27, 2015 email below and a sentence contained in the email of a Veteran marked as EXHIBIT “A,” it appears that Guam Veterans are eligible for the program. That sentence in your May 27, 2015 email to me below states—***“Choice program is developing in Guam, and that should assist with timely access.”*** Assuming there was the delay referenced above to implement the program or any delays in implementing the program, it would appear that there has been delays that should assist Veterans with timely access.

The above referenced possibilities of delays may have occurred as a result of statutory exceptions relative to the program not being available to Guam Veterans for a certain period of time after its effective date. Any delays do not appear to be justified as a result of the time required to enter into agreements with private providers. Insurance companies on Guam that issue healthcare policies, generally take less than Three (3) months to enter agreements with private providers on island and with off-island private providers. In an effort to foster transparency and provide accurate information rather than leaving various points about the Choice Program to assumptions, I suggest issuing a press release to all Guam media and notices to all Guam and Regional Veterans containing information to deem factual. This will also resolve your concerns stated in your email to me below about inaccurate reporting by the media.

Two Employees of VA Pacific Islands Healthcare Systems: Wayne, I would appreciate your help in meeting directly with two employees of your office whose names are referenced in two different email responses below.

1. The first employee is **Joanne T. Strohlin, Patient Relations Specialist**. The response written by Ms. Strohlin to a Guam Veteran is not one expected of an individual placed in the position of a “Patient Relations Specialist.” Clearly her email response indicates a lack of interest to foster patient relations by not taking immediate steps to begin resolving the concern of a Veteran. The Veteran’s email that contains verbatim the response by Ms. Strohlin was sent to those that attended a meeting of the Guam Veterans Commission. The Veteran that wrote this email was not only present at this meeting, but raised several concerns to Commission members during the meeting. I was also present at this meeting at the invitation of the Commission’s Chairman. This Veteran’s emails referenced in this message were sent to practically everyone present at that meeting. He included me as one of many individuals addressed in his emails. You will note in his email a sentence that essentially says: **he had a complete evaluation done in February and to date is still waiting for the consult to be approved . (SEE EXHIBITS “A” and “B”)**

2. The second employee is **Lynn A Oikowski, Privacy /FOIA Officer/ Records Manager**. I sent an email message addressed to Craig on **Friday, March 6, 2015 at 8:52 AM, approximately three hours before our scheduled meeting** at your office at noon on the same day (HAWAII TIME AND DATE). In this email I

thanked Craig for arranging the meeting, listed several questions that call for no names of any patient and asked if the responses could be provided within two weeks. **(SEE EXHIBIT "C")**. When I met Craig at Tripler, he was with a fairly new employee with your office but I do not recall his name. Before going upstairs to the conference room, the three of us had lunch at the patio area of a food court. At no time that I was present with Craig did he raise any concerns about the questions or any reference to anything I needed to do further to receive responses. I received about two months later an **email from Lynn Oikowski which was sent to me on Wednesday, May 13, 2015 at 11:08 AM Hawaii date and time (SEE EXHIBIT "D")**. At no time between Friday March 6, 2015 at 8:52am Hawaii date and time and Wednesday, May 13, 2015 at 11:08am Hawaii time, was I ever asked to submit any further information or provided any instructions in order to get the responses to the questions. **On Tuesday, May 5, 2015 at 5:38 PM Guam time**, I sent an email to Craig expressing my disappointment that responses to the questions were still not provided. In this same email, I expressed delays in care to Veterans, referenced the need for the responses and filing a Freedom of Information Act request to acquire responses to those questions. I also listed various examples of breaches of fiduciary duties to Veterans and resulting liability exposure to VA and personal liability exposure to those responsible for insuring our Veterans have access to care. **I cannot help but feel there is a correlation between explaining liability exposures and the impacts of a class action lawsuit with the email sent about a week after which asked for questions in order to provide responses.**

I hope Wayne that after reading this response, you will be able to recognize that frequently reaching out to Guam and Regional Veterans, frequently meeting with them, providing them assurances in person as the Director of the very agency responsible for their access to care and demonstrating to them that you personally are going to initiate steps to have the Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention Act amended to include Guam, will help foster mitigating the tremendous frustration our Veterans feel.

If you feel there are any ways that members of our Guam and Regional Veterans Healthcare Council can provide your office with information to cut cost and a corresponding increase in access to care, to make introductions to organizations that can help provide ways to solve the serious problems that have existed for years, to show how telemedicine can be available for Veteran care at virtually no cost or introductions to capable IT experts to provide options for installing IT systems and software options for Veterans to be register on Guam and the processing time period significantly shorter compared to the lengthy time that has existed for years, please feel free to contact me any time.

Last, in the same manner as the Department of Justice, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and other Federal agencies have turned to the private sector to realize savings, assume risks, use their own financing and be responsible for operations, maintenance and management of their facilities, the same can be done for VA relative to providing our Veterans with the standard of care they not only deserve but have earned.

Thank you very much Wayne.

Peter
Peter R. Sgro, Jr.; Chairman / Founder
Guam & Regional Veterans Healthcare Council

Direct Office: 671.477.4772
Cellular: 671.688.7476
Email: psgro@dpacguam.com

From: <Pfeffer>, "Wayne L." <Wayne.Pfeffer@va.gov>
Date: Wednesday, May 27, 2015 at 3:46 AM
To: PETER <psgro@dpacguam.com>, Craig Oswald <craig.oswald@va.gov>, "thomas.driskil@va.gov" <thomas.driskil@va.gov>
Cc: Richard Cruz <richard.billett.cruz@gmail.com>, Richard Cruz <richard.billett.cruz@gmail.com>, "Jay R. Merrill" <Jmerrill@guam.net>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Death of a Veteran: "The VA and our many successful efforts, ever expanding Guam"

Thank you for your email Mr. Sgro, and truly sorry of your health concerns. I sincerely wish you the best. I wanted to clarify several points in your email. There are difficult recruitment and retention challenges for our Guam CBOC. We aggressively recruit in fact I have authorized recruitment beyond the assigned level for physicians recognizing unexpected vacancies are hard to absorb). We had an unexpected resignation of a physician while we have been recruiting. **Hopefully** we will finalize a replacement soon. I have authorized several physicians from Honolulu to rotate to Guam to ensure adequate coverage as we recruit. We have several rural health teams beginning shortly that we travel to the rural parts of the Island to see Guam Veterans close to home. Recruitments are being successful in this regard.

As to the patient you mentioned, I cannot comment on specific patient conditions, due to HIPPA (privacy) laws, but from review I do not believe the circumstances are as presented. Unfortunately the media offer prints stories without validation. I have a special place in my heart for Guam, in fact I have traveled there more often than any other location, including the Hawaiian Islands. I intend to continue work with the Veteran community, and congressional parties to ensure we provide the best healthcare we can afford. Choice program is developing in Guam, and that should assist with timely access. Sincerely, Wayne

Wayne L. Pfeffer MHA FACHE

Director

VA Pacific Islands Healthcare system

808 433-0100

EXHIBIT "A"

On May 19, 2015, at 2:40 PM

, _____ wrote:

Re: _____

Below is the secure message I just sent to the Honolulu patient advocate. I posted it to the VA Face book site as well. <https://www.facebook.com/VeteransAffairs?fref=ts>

This is after I spoke to the VA Choice Program Office and the CBOC which both concurred that the Choice Program though not implemented is available to Vets on Guam.

FYI, I had a complete _____ evaluation done in February and we are still waiting for the consult to be approved for my new hearing aids!

From:

EXHIBIT B

Date: May 23, 2015 at 11:17:57 AM GMT+10

I received a response from my secure message to the "Patient Advocate in Honolulu. Here is that response.

Aloha Mr. Mead, I apologize for your perception of uncaring attitude from Honolulu for Guam Veterans. I will be forwarding your concerns to our Rural Health Coordinator, as well as the ACOS, Primary Care.

Joanne T. Strohlin
Patient Relations Specialist

Excuse me apologize and forward? That is not a patient relations specialist in my book. How about an I will personally take, follow-up and get you answers type of attitude. My response was not kind.

EXHIBIT "C"

From: PETER <psgro@dpacguam.com>
Date: Friday, March 6, 2015 at 8:52 AM
To: Craig Oswald <craig.oswald@va.gov>
Subject: Good Morning

Good Morning Craig:

I am looking forward to our meeting today and again want to thank you for arranging this meeting. I hope that I can take a tour of your VA behavioral health ward. Unless there are restrictions, I would like to say hello to a few Veterans from Guam in the acute care area.

I am hoping that I can get some information which I am sure will be more accurate than information we would get on Guam, of course without any names or other personal information:

1. Over the past three years, the number of Guam and Regional Veterans treated for behavioral health issues?
2. The top two behavioral health diagnosis of Guam and Regional Veterans over the past three years, especially those diagnosed with PTSD?
3. The top three diagnosis of Guam and Regional Veterans with acute care health issues over the past three years?
4. The number of Guam and Regional Veterans over the past three years that had to be air-vac from Guam to Tripler?
5. The total cost that VA had to reimburse the Navy for Veterans care at the Guam Naval hospital over the past three years?
6. The total cost to VA for the care of Guam and Regional Veterans at Tripler and other off-island facilities over the past three years?

If there is any possibility of receiving this information within the next two weeks, that would be very helpful in arriving at financial projections for purposes of the top two Guam insurance companies that have contracts with the Federal Government to provide health insurance to non-military Federal employees.

Thank you Craig. I will be arriving about 45 minutes earlier since Tripler is a large facility and want to insure I am at the conference room before our noon meeting.

Regards,

Peter

Peter R. Sgro, Jr.; President and Chairman
International Group, Inc.

Suite 101, South Marine Corp Drive, Tamuning, Guam 96913

Direct Office: 671.477.4772
Cellular: 671.688.7476
Email: psgro@dpacguam.com

EXHIBIT "D"

From: <Olkowski>, "Lynn A." <Lynn.Olkowski@va.gov>
Date: Wednesday, May 13, 2015 at 11:08 AM
To: PETER <psgro@dpacguam.com>
Subject: FOIA Request

Good Day Mr. Sgro,

I am the Freedom of Information officer at the VA Pacific Islands Health Care System,

and I am reaching out to help facilitate your request for agency information. If you could please let me know what information you need, and I will process the request for you. Please be specific in describing the data, and what purpose it will be used for. If you should have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

v/r

Lynn A Olkowski

Privacy/FOIA Officer/Records Manager

VA Pacific Islands Healthcare System, VISN 21

459 Patterson Road

Honolulu, HI 96819

(808) 433-3026



Office of Senator Frank B. Aguon, Jr. <admin@frankaguonjr.com>

Re: [EXTERNAL] GUAM VETERANS HEALTHCARE: Response to Director of VA Pacific Islands Healthcare System Email Dated Wednesday, May 27, 2015 at 3:46 AM Barry Mead's response!

Barry Mead <bigb@teleguam.net>

Wed, Jun 3, 2015 at 10:36 AM

To: Wayne Pfeiffer <Wayne.Pfeiffer@va.gov>, Craig Oswald <Craig.Oswald@va.gov>, thomas.driskil@va.gov
Cc: Richard Cruz <richard.billett.cruz@gmail.com>, "Jay R. Merrill" <Jmerrill@guam.net>, juanoblaz@gmail.com, Shelly Santos <shellylinsantos@gmail.com>, "Ady, Mike" <mike@m80systems.com>, Lee Webber <Lee@mdaguam.com>, Frank Aguon <aguon4guam@gmail.com>, Ray Gibson <breakfastshowk57@gmail.com>, Gina Ramos <gramos@calvos.com>, Franklin Arriola <franklin.arriola@guam.gov>, Patricia Taimanglo <patricia.taimanglo@gmail.com>, Risha Aguon <rmaguon.imft@gmail.com>, greglizama@gmail.com, Nathaniel Berg <nberg@guamradiology.com>, Hoa Van Nguyen <hoavannguyen@yahoo.com>, Hieu Campus <hieu.campus@hotmail.com>, Maureen Maratita <publisher@glimpsesofiguam.com>, "George, Duane M" <dmgeorge@guam.gannett.com>, Carlos V Camacho <ironwoodhousing@gmail.com>, mcruziii@guampdn.com, Cesar Cabot <cc@cmlaw.us>, Mark Calvo <mark.calvo@guam.gov>, john.j.whitt@mail.house.gov, Edward Untalan <euntalan@fnb.com>, Jacqueline Sablan <jacquelinesablan@gmail.com>, Safa <drssafa@gmail.com>, Eveline Campus <evzee@hotmail.com>, John Setiadi Tan <j.setiadi@setiadiarchitects.com>, Joleen Certeza <jacerteza@yahoo.com>, Benjamin Cruz <senadotbjcruz@gmail.com>, Senator Tommy Morrison <tommy=senatormorrison.com@mail25.atl71.mcdlv.net>, "Cruz III, Manuel" <mcruziii@guam.gannett.com>, "Alan G. Van Aken" <agunner77@teleguam.net>, Dan Perez <danperez671@gmail.com>, Brian Merenda <bjmerenda@yahoo.com>, Al Parke <ttsguam@hotmail.com>, John Rivera <jgrivera1949@ymail.com>, Joseph San Nicolas <joe_kamudo@yahoo.com>, Juan Finona <juan_finona@yahoo.com>, "M. Mendiola" <mmendiola159@gmail.com>, cil_m@hotmail.com, Cindy Gogo <cindy.gogo@gvao.guam.gov>, "Santos, Edward L." <Edward.Santos2@va.gov>, Sarah Mv Thomas Nededog <sarahtn56@gmail.com>, Frank Nededog Salas <googat@yahoo.com>, Jesse Salas <jesse.salas@fe.navy.mil>, jesse.fredericksen@va.gov, Joaquin Santos Jr <joaquin.santosjr@yahoo.com>, Alex Rhowuniong <production@joyfmradio.net>, Leslie San Nicolas <napujames53@yahoo.com>, "Head, Helene H." <Helene.Head2@va.gov>, John Blas <john.blas@westcare.com>, John Taitano <jnbatulai@guam.net>, Joseph Foster <fosterjoseph@hotmail.com>, Marlene Slomka <marlene.slomkams@gmail.com>, Diron Cruz <diron.cruz@hotmail.com>, Rick Cruz <richardcruz@teleguam.net>, Richard Taitague <richard.taitague.ctr@fe.navy.mil>, mophtd@ite.net, John Unpingco <john.unpingco@gvao.guam.gov>, "Rodney A. Cruz Jr." <rodneycruzjr@hotmail.com>, norma.castillon@gmail.com, Tommy Charfauros <tomas.charfauros@gmail.com>, "Stahli, Lester L. VBAHONO" <Lester.Stahli@va.gov>, Tom Ada <tom@senatorada.org>, "Jr. Admin Office of Senator Frank Aguon" <admin@frankaguonjr.com>, Aline Yamashita <aline4families@gmail.com>, Frank Whitman <frank@mvguam.com>, news@k57.com, Benjamin Cruz <senator@senatorbjcruz.com>, Tina Barnes <senator@tinamunabarnes.com>, Rory Respicio <roryforguam@gmail.com>, Thomas Ada <office@senatorada.org>, Dennis Rodriguez <senatorodrodriguez@gmail.com>, Michael San Nicolas <senatorsannicolas@gmail.com>, Nerissa Underwood <senatorunderwood@guamlegislature.org>, Anthony Ada <senatortonyada@guamlegislature.org>, Mary Torres <marycamachotorres@gmail.com>, Frank Blas <frank.blasjr@gmail.com>, Brant McCreadie <brantforguam@gmail.com>, James Espaldon <jespaldonesq@gmail.com>, info@futuromediagroup.org, dcrisost@guam.gannett.com, news@mvguam.com, dcrisostomo@guampdn.com, sabrina@kuam.com, "Paulino, Benny M MG USARMY (US)" <benny.m.paulino.mil@mail.mil>, juanoblas@gmail.com, John Pangilinan <starsportscard@yahoo.com>, Franklin Arriola <franklin.arriola@gmail.com>, Bobby Shringi <bshringi@moylans.net>, Frank Campillo <fcampillo@calvos.com>, Gerry Perez <geap43@yahoo.com>, Shelly Gibson <sgibson@ite.net>, Vince Leon Guerrero <vincent.leonguerrero@guam.gov>, Jackie Hanson <managingeditor@glimpsesofiguam.com>, Ken Leon-Guerrero <kenleonguerrero@yahoo.com>, logan reyes <loganreyes@gmail.com>, Peter Sgro <psgro1@icloud.com>

Hafa Adai,

If I may chime in on this please as one with first hand knowledge and experience. I am the Vet with the lousy experience with the "Patient Advocate" who in my opinion is nothing more than a note taker, and pass it on. I have received two other messages dated March 22 that said I would get a feed back. As of yet NOTHING! A true advocate follows-up checks back and ensures that patient concerns are addressed. My experience with now two "Patient Advocates" has resulted in nothing, hence I will deal directly with Mr. Pfeffer and Mr. Oswald only. If no response or satisfactory results then Mr. McDonald.

The following is exactly what Mr. Oswald had to say with reference to the Walk-in at the Guam CBOC.

VA's policy is to have walk in capability, which is something that is available at our CBOC's. It is a triaged type system, with both the Nurse and if indicated, physicians seeing the patients. A Veteran may also be advised to seek help from the Emergency Room, such as at Naval Hospital, when the assessment reveals that the care needed will exceed that which is available in the CBOC ie: Urgent or Emergency Care. The Guam CBOC received instruction some time ago that the No Walk In Sign should be discontinued.

The sign has in fact been taken down, but the NO WALK-IN POLICY REMAINS IN PLACE AND VETS ARE DIRECTED TO THE NAVAL HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM WITH NO SEEING A NURSE OR ANY ASSISTANCE FROM THE CBOC! There is NO ASSESSMENT! I confirmed this just 1 hour ago! *So please Mr. Oswald, or Mr. Pfeffer tell me, are you guys lying to us or is it you just don't know what is going on in Guam?*

As for the Choice Program, June 1st has come and gone, and yet there has been no action or notification of any clinic in Guam on the list. Are the Vets supposed to go get a clinic and then wait for the VA to negotiate or is the Honolulu office taking care of it. TriWest says the VA, the VA says the Vets. If it is the Vets then consider this a notification of who I want. FHP Takecare (since that is where I was referred for my diabetes evaluation) and IHP Medical clinic specifically Dr. Florenzo Lizama. The Administrator for the IHP clinic is cc'd in this thread.

Lastly in checking my Secure Messaging just now I find that I have another "new" doctor. May I ask when was I going to be notified of this. I was at the clinic and found that we now have 3 medical doctors, the person I asked said she believed they were permanent.

By the way did you (Mr. Oswald) ever find out what happened to my volunteer application?

Senseremente,

Barry L. Mead
Viet Nam May 1968 – Dec 1969

From: Wayne Pfeffer <Wayne.Pfeffer@va.gov>
Date: Thu, 28 May 2015 16:08:21 -0700
To: Peter Sgro <psgro@dpacguam.com>, Craig Oswald <Craig.Oswald@va.gov>, <thomas.driskil@va.gov>
Cc: Richard Cruz <richard.billett.cruz@gmail.com>, "Jay R. Merrill" <Jmerrill@guam.net>, <juanoblaz@gmail.com>, Shelly Santos <shellylynsantos@gmail.com>, Barry Mead <bigb@teleguam.net>, "Rodney A. Cruz" <rodneycruzjr@hotmail.com>, "Ady, Mike"

<mike@m80systems.com>, Lee Webber <Lee@mdaguam.com>, Frank Aguon <aguon4guam@gmail.com>, Ray Gibson <breakfastshowk57@gmail.com>, Gina Ramos <gramos@calvos.com>, Franklin Arriola <franklin.arriola@guam.gov>, Patricia Taimanglo <patricia.taimanglo@gmail.com>, Risha Aguon <rmaguon.imft@gmail.com>, <greglizama@gmail.com>, Nathaniel Berg <nberg@guamradiology.com>, Hoa Van Nguyen <hoavannnguyen@yahoo.com>, Hieu Campus <hieu.campus@hotmail.com>, Maureen Maratita <publisher@glimpsesofiguam.com>, Barry Mead <bigb@teleguam.net>, "George, Duane M" <dmgeorge@guam.gannett.com>, Carlos V Camacho <ironwoodhousing@gmail.com>, <mcruziii@guampdn.com>, Nathaniel Berg <nberg@guamradiology.com>, Hoa Van Nguyen <hoavannnguyen@yahoo.com>, <greglizama@gmail.com>, Cesar Cabot <cc@cmlaw.us>, <Mark.calvo@guam.gov>, <john.j.whitt@mail.house.gov>, Edward Untalan <euntalan@fhh.com>, Jacqueline Sablan <jacquelinesablan@gmail.com>, Richard Cruz <richard.billett.cruz@gmail.com>, Safa <drssafa@gmail.com>, Eveline Campus <evzee@hotmail.com>, Risha Aguon <rmaguon.imft@gmail.com>, Frank Aguon <aguon4guam@gmail.com>, Maureen Maratita <publisher@glimpsesofiguam.com>, John Setiadi Tan <j.setiadi@setiadiarchitects.com>, Ray Gibson <breakfastshowk57@gmail.com>, Joleen Certeza <jacerteza@yahoo.com>, Richard Cruz <richard.billett.cruz@gmail.com>, Benjamin Cruz <senadotbjcruz@gmail.com>, Senator Tommy Morrison <tommy=senatormorrison.com@mail25.atf71.mcdlv.net>, "Cruz III, Manuel" <mcruziii@guam.gannett.com>, "George, Duane M" <dmgeorge@guam.gannett.com>, "Alan G. Van Aken" <agunner77@teleguam.net>, Dan Perez <danperez671@gmail.com>, Brian Merenda <bjmerenda@yahoo.com>, Al Parke <ttsguam@hotmail.com>, John Rivera <jgrivera1949@ymail.com>, Joseph San Nicolas <joe_kamudo@yahoo.com>, Juan Finona <juan_finona@yahoo.com>, "M. Mendiola" <mmendiola159@gmail.com>, <cil_m@hotmail.com>, Cindy Gogo <cindy.gogo@gvao.guam.gov>, "Santos, Edward L." <Edward.Santos2@va.gov>, Sarah Mv Thomas Nededog <sarahtn56@gmail.com>, Frank Nededog Salas <goagat@yahoo.com>, Jesse Salas <jesse.salas@fe.navy.mil>, <jesse.fredericksen@va.gov>, Joaquin Santos Jr <joaquin.santosjr@yahoo.com>, Alex Rhowuniong <production@joyfmradio.net>, Leslie San Nicolas <napujames53@yahoo.com>, "Head, Helene H." <Helene.Head2@va.gov>, John Blas <john.blas@westcare.com>, John Taitano <jnbatulai@guam.net>, Joseph Foster <fosterjoseph@hotmail.com>, Marlene Slomka <marlene.slomkams@gmail.com>, Diron Cruz <diron.cruz@hotmail.com>, Rick Cruz <richardcruz@teleguam.net>, Richard Taitague <richard.taitague.ctr@fe.navy.mil>, <mophtd@ite.net>, John Unpingco <john.unpingco@gvao.guam.gov>, "Rodney A. Cruz Jr." <rodneycruzjr@hotmail.com>, <norma.castillon@gmail.com>, Tommy Charfauros <tomas.charfauros@gmail.com>, "Stahli, Lester L. VBAHONO" <Lester.Stahli@va.gov>, Tom Ada <tom@senatorada.org>, "Jr. Admin Office of Senator Frank Aguon" <admin@frankaguonjr.com>, Aline Yamashita <aline4families@gmail.com>, Frank Whitman <frank@mvguam.com>, <news@k57.com>, Benjamin Cruz <senator@senatorbjcruz.com>, Tina Barnes <senator@tinamunabarnes.com>, Rory Respicio <rorryforguam@gmail.com>, Thomas Ada <office@senatorada.org>, Frank Aguon <aguon4guam@gmail.com>, Dennis Rodriquez <senatordrodriguez@gmail.com>, Michael San Nicolas <senatorsannicolas@gmail.com>, Nerissa Underwood <senatorunderwood@guamlegislature.org>, Anthony Ada <senatortonyada@guamlegislature.org>, Mary Torres <marycamachotorres@gmail.com>, Frank Blas <frank.blasjr@gmail.com>, Brant McCreadie <brantforguam@gmail.com>, James Espaldon <jespaldonesq@gmail.com>, <info@futuromediagroup.org>, <dcrisost@guam.gannett.com>, <news@mvguam.com>, <dcrisostomo@guampdn.com>,

<sabrina@kuam.com>, Jacqueline Sablan <jacquelinesablan@gmail.com>, "Paulino, Benny M MG USARMY (US)" <benny.m.paulino.mil@mail.mil>, <juanoblas@gmail.com>, John Pangilinan <starsportscard@yahoo.com>, Franklin Arriola <franklin.arriola@gmail.com>, Bobby Shringi <bshringi@moylans.net>, Eveline Campus <evzee@hotmail.com>, Frank Campillo <fcampillo@calvos.com>, Gerry Perez <geap43@yahoo.com>, Shelly Gibson <sgibson@ite.net>, Vince Leon Guerrero <vincent.leonguerrero@guam.gov>, Jackie Hanson <managingeditor@glimpsesofiguam.com>, Ken Leon-Guerrero <kenleonguerrero@yahoo.com>, logan reyes <loganreyes@gmail.com>

Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] GUAM VETERANS HEALTHCARE: Response to Director of VA Pacific Islands Healthcare System Email Dated Wednesday, May 27, 2015 at 3:46 AM

Peter, thank you for your insightful email. I will certainly look at it very closely, especially your suggestions. Thanks, Wayne

Wayne L. Pfeffer MHA FACHE
Director
VA Pacific Islands Healthcare system
808 433-0100

From: Peter Sgro [mailto:psgro@dpacguam.com]

Sent: Thursday, May 28, 2015 12:59 PM

To: Pfeffer, Wayne L.; Oswald, Craig R.; thomas.driskil@va.gov

Cc: Richard Cruz; Jay R. Merrill; juanoblas@gmail.com; Shelly Santos; Barry Mead; Rodney A. Cruz; Ady, Mike; Lee Webber; Frank Aguon; William Ray Gibson; Gina Ramos; Franklin P. Arriola; Patricia Taimanglo; Risha Aguon; greglizama@gmail.com; Nathaniel Berg; Hoa Van Nguyen; Hieu Campus; Maureen Maratita; Barry Mead; George, Duane M; Carlos V Camacho; mcruziii@guampdn.com; Nathaniel Berg; Hoa Van Nguyen; greglizama@gmail.com; Cesar Cabot; Mark.calvo@guam.gov; john.j.whitt@mail.house.gov; Edward Untalan; Jacqueline Sablan; Richard Cruz; Safa; Eveline Campus; Risha Aguon; Frank Aguon; Maureen Maratita; John Setiadi Tan; William Ray Gibson; Joleen Certeza; Richard Cruz; Benjamin Cruz; Senator Tommy Morrison; Cruz III, Manuel; George, Duane M; Alan G. Van Aken; Dan Perez; Brian Merenda; Al Parke; John Rivera; Joseph San Nicolas; Juan Finona; M. Mendiola; cil_m@hotmail.com; Cindy Gogo; Santos, Edward L.; Sarah Mv Thomas Nededog; Frank Nededog Salas; Jesse Salas; jesse.fredericksen@va.gov; Joaquin Santos Jr; Alex Rhowuniong; Leslie San Nicolas; Head, Helene H.; John Blas; John Taitano; Joseph Foster; Marlene Slomka; Diron Cruz; Rick Cruz; Richard Taitague; mophtd@ite.net; John Unpingco; Rodney A. Cruz Jr.; norma.castillon@gmail.com; Tommy Charfauros; Stahl, Lester L. VBAHONO; Tom Ada; Jr. Admin Office of Senator Frank Aguon; Aline Yamashita; Frank Whitman; news@k57.com; senator@senatorbjcruz.com; senator@tinamunabarnes.com; roryforguam@gmail.com; office@senatorada.org; aguon4guam@gmail.com; senatorrodriguez@gmail.com; senatorsannicolas@gmail.com; senatorunderwood@guamlegislature.org; senatortonyada@guamlegislature.org; marycamachotorres@gmail.com; frank.blasjr@gmail.com; brantforguam@gmail.com; jespaldonesq@gmail.com; info@futuromediagroup.org; Crisostomo, David (dcrisost@guam.gannett.com); news@mvguam.com; 'dcrisostomo@guampdn.com'; 'sabrina@kuam.com'; Jacqueline Sablan; Paulino, Benny M MG USARMY (US); juanoblas@gmail.com; John Pangilinan; Franklin Arriola; Bobby Shringi; Eveline Campus; Frank Campillo; Gerry Perez; Shelly Gibson; Vincent Leon Guerrero; Jackie Hanson; Ken Leon-Guerrero; logan reyes

Subject: [EXTERNAL] GUAM VETERANS HEALTHCARE: Response to Director of VA Pacific Islands Healthcare System Email Dated Wednesday, May 27, 2015 at 3:46 AM

Importance: High

Hi Wayne:

Thank you very much for your email below. I appreciate as the Director of VA Pacific Islands Health Care System that you took the time to write this message below to me. I have noted several concerns and positions in your email message below and offer some suggestions to consider as solutions. I have highlighted in Red for reference certain sentences or parts of sentences in your message the suggestions and / or comments address.

Out of courtesy to you, I want to first state the reason for courtesy copying those in this reply. I believe that transparency fosters positive outcomes. Those of us that started working on just a vision for the development of a private hospital on Guam, also believed in transparency. We informed the media and numerous stakeholders throughout this process in our effort to inform the community of our work over several years. This not only kept our community informed but also clarified any information which was not accurate. Transparency also resulted in additional community support we needed because of the magnitude of what we worked at getting developed. I noted one of your concerns is inaccurate information. I touched on this concern and suggested a solution to this as well.

A. The Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention Act Signed into Law by President Obama and It's Purpose:

- As you may know this Act does not apply to Guam but does for all States for reasons that are not clear;
- This law is aimed at reducing military and veteran suicides and improving their access to quality mental health care;
- The Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans Act, or SAV Act, is named after Clay Hunt, a decorated Marine veteran who, upon his return from combat in Iraq and Afghanistan, struggled with post-traumatic stress. Hunt was wounded in Anbar Province and witnessed the combat deaths of close friends and
- Two years after his discharge and after repeated setbacks in his medical care, Hunt took his own life.

Suggestion: Advocate for an Amendment that includes Guam. It would not be difficult to contact our Congresswoman so she can contact the Chairs of various Congressional Committees VA offices in Washington D.C. And say the Director of Health and Human Services for Region 9 whose office is in San Francisco (I can arrange for that meeting).

B. Suggestions for Investigation of Recent Suicide: NOTE——These suggestions are based on a telephone conversation with one in a position to know of information related to this case. The conversation ended with being told "We Lost A Brother." Please note that these suggestions are based on information provided to me during a telephone conversation with one in a position to know events prior to the incident and some time after.

- Personally meet or speak by phone to those familiar with several details of this case. Can I provide your office number to at least one so you can be called to discuss this yourself directly?

- Acquire and review his registration card issued after discharge and all medical records from the date of discharge to the date of the incident;
- Acquire and review all records or any written materials about the cause of death.
- Determine why the letter "D" is often not used in the word "PTSD" and at times referred to as "PTS" and
- Call for an investigation as to delayed responses after Guam Veterans call the Veterans Suicide Hotline. One of their phone numbers is 1-(800)-273-8255

C. Inaccurate Reporting by Guam Media

Suggestion: I am more than happy to provide you with a list of names and contact numbers of the owners of all Guam media, Publisher and Editor of print media and all broadcast media including reports by radio and/or television

D."to ensure we provide the best healthcare we can afford" and "I have authorized several physicians from Honolulu to rotate to Guam to ensure adequate coverage as we recruit.

Wayne, I had sent by email to Craig a list of members and their titles of our Council after the "Guam and Regional Healthcare Council" was formed and before our first meeting. For purposes of accuracy as to the members of our Council, I personally determined the varying expertise of each member. The selection process also included some members with immediate and direct access to various necessary individuals or companies that are able to foster our goals. This includes individuals and /or companies in Honolulu, San Francisco, Seattle, New York and Washington D.C. Our Senior Advisors include the former Secretary of the Navy and former Director of Health and Human Services. Some other members of our Council are doctors that are Veterans and some that first came to Guam to work at the Naval Hospital, Psychologists, Certified expert in Federal New Market Tax Credits and other Federal tax credit programs, the Dean of the University of Guam School of Nursing, financial analyst and an officer of a major bank, representatives of insurance companies that have expertise in providing Federal healthcare insurance policies, an architect and our research expert that focuses for our purposes, information on Veterans healthcare.

Suggestions: Often experts in various fields chosen to do studies, reports on certain subjects, various developments, financing and other work, are brought to Guam from the mainland. There is a perception that they can produce better outcomes than those that were either born and raised on Guam or have spent years of their lives on Guam. In most all of the various industries, Guam maintains within our own community greater expertise in producing better outcomes. In fact, this is the case with even healthcare matters in the region. In fact, when a Federal RFP was issued to do a report that included a healthcare assessment of the Chuuk Hospital, those that wrote the healthcare assessment were residents of Guam that also went to Chuuk to conduct interviews with all hospital staff and government representatives. My colleague that

was also a member of the Healthcare Assessment Team, met the Director of Nursing who was a former student of hers when this Director of Nursing attended the University of Guam Nursing School.

- Meet with officers of various businesses on Guam that for various reasons cut cost without adversely affecting providing services to their customers or clients;
- Meet those doctors on Guam that were able to have 100% of their Federal Medical School Loans forgiven by the Federal Government after only working on Guam for four years;
- Review invoices over a 10 year period that are billed to your office that directly relates to Guam and Regional Veterans care, including without limitation payments to the Navy and Air Force
- Begin discussions with the top two Faith Based Healthcare Organizations to provide more doctors and psychiatrists solely for Veteran Care. This was the recommendation we made to the Federal Government in our Health Assessment report for the Chuuk hospital for management operations, maintenance and recruitment of doctors. Cost reduction was one of our reasons since Faith Based Healthcare Organizations that own hospitals and/ or manage hospitals globally seek a rate of return of between 4% to 7%;
- Compare the cost of your current offices at Trippler to smaller and lower cost office space in commercial buildings close to Trippler;
- Determine the the demand for Veteran care in all areas within your jurisdiction and if the demand is not large enough in those jurisdictions for the number of doctors, transfer them to Guam;
- Guam has a Telemedicine Act which three members of the Foundation I chaired when it was active, wrote the entire Telemedicine law. Utilize grants issued by the Guam office of the Rural Development section of the Department of Agriculture. The Director who was a member of the Foundation I founded is still the Director of this office. Born on Guam, he first worked for the department office in Honolulu. He is allocated enough grant funds for Telemedicine that does not get used.
- Utilize and have developed software for IT systems that allow Guam and Regional Veterans to be processed for VA healthcare benefits in less than 24 hours right here on Guam rather than wait sometimes for several weeks to be processed in Honolulu. This results if the right IT system including software to lower costs and make it virtually impossible to have data lost.

APPEARANCE OF AT LEAST A 17 MONTH DELAY BEFORE IMPLEMENTATION OF CHOICE PROGRAM FOR GUAM VETERANS:

According to information on the Choice Program contained in the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs website at <http://www.va.gov/opa/choiceact/>, the effective date of the program is referenced by the following sentence— *"Beginning November 5, 2014, the new Choice Program will begin to cover non-VA care for eligible Veterans enrolled in VA healthcare."* Below this statement are several eligibility requirements but it states that if any one of them does apply to a Veteran, then that Veteran is eligible for the program. Based on one of the sentences contained in your May 27, 2015 email below and a sentence contained in the email of a Veteran marked as

EXHIBIT "A," it appears that Guam Veterans are eligible for the program. That sentence in your May 27, 2015 email to me below states—**"Choice program is developing in Guam, and that should assist with timely access."** Assuming there was the delay referenced above to implement the program or any delays in implementing the program, it would appear that there has been delays that should assist Veterans with timely access.

The above referenced possibilities of delays may have occurred as a result of statutory exceptions relative to the program not being available to Guam Veterans for a certain period of time after its effective date. Any delays do not appear to be justified as a result of the time required to enter into agreements with private providers. Insurance companies on Guam that issue healthcare policies, generally take less than Three (3) months to enter agreements with private providers on island and with off-island private providers. In an effort to foster transparency and provide accurate information rather than leaving various points about the Choice Program to assumptions, I suggest issuing a press release to all Guam media and notices to all Guam and Regional Veterans containing information to deem factual. This will also resolve your concerns stated in your email to me below about inaccurate reporting by the media.

Two Employees of VA Pacific Islands Healthcare Systems: Wayne, I would appreciate your help in meeting directly with two employees of your office whose names are referenced in two different email responses below.

1. The first employee is **Joanne T. Strohlin, Patient Relations Specialist**. The response written by Ms. Strohlin to a Guam Veteran is not one expected of an individual placed in the position of a "Patient Relations Specialist." Clearly her email response indicates a lack of interest to foster patient relations by not taking immediate steps to begin resolving the concern of a Veteran. The Veteran's email that contains verbatim the response by Ms. Strohlin was sent to those that attended a meeting of the Guam Veterans Commission. The Veteran that wrote this email was not only present at this meeting, but raised several concerns to Commission members during the meeting. I was also present at this meeting at the invitation of the Commissions' Chairman. This Veteran's emails referenced in this message were sent to practically everyone present at that meeting. He included me as one of many individuals addressed in his emails. You will note in his email a sentence that essentially says: **he had a complete evaluation done in February and to date is still waiting for the consult to be approved . (SEE EXHIBITS "A" and "B")**

2. The second employee is **Lynn A Oikowski, Privacy /FOIA Officer/ Records Manager**. I sent an email message addressed to Craig on **Friday, March 6, 2015 at 8:52 AM,**

approximately three hours before our scheduled meeting at your office at noon on the same day (HAWAII TIME AND DATE). In this email I thanked Craig for arranging the meeting, listed several questions that call for no names of any patient and asked if the responses could be provided within two weeks. **(SEE EXHIBIT "C")**. When I met Craig at Tripler, he was with a fairly new employee with your office but I do not recall his name. Before going upstairs to the conference room, the three of us had lunch at the patio area of a food court. At no time that I was present with Craig did he raise any concerns about the questions or any reference to anything I needed to do further to receive responses. I received about two months later an **email from Lynn Oikowski which was sent to me on Wednesday, May 13, 2015 at 11:08 AM Hawaii date and time (SEE EXHIBIT "D")**. At no time between Friday March 6, 2015 at 8:52am Hawaii date and time and Wednesday, May 13, 2015 at 11:08am Hawaii time, was I ever asked to submit any further information or provided any instructions in order to get the responses to the questions. **On Tuesday, May 5, 2015 at 5:38 PM Guam time**, I sent an email to Craig expressing my disappointment that responses to the questions were still not provided. In this same email, I expressed delays in care to Veterans, referenced the need for the responses and filing a Freedom of Information Act request to acquire responses to those questions. I also listed various examples of breaches of fiduciary duties to Veterans and resulting liability exposure to VA and personal liability exposure to those responsible for insuring our Veterans have access to care. **I cannot help but feel there is a correlation between explaining liability exposures and the impacts of a class action lawsuit with the email sent about a week after which asked for questions in order to provide responses.**

I hope Wayne that after reading this response, you will be able to recognize that frequently reaching out to Guam and Regional Veterans, frequently meeting with them, providing them assurances in person as the Director of the very agency responsible for their access to care and demonstrating to them that you personally are going to initiate steps to have the Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention Act amended to include Guam, will help foster mitigating the tremendous frustration our Veterans feel.

If you feel there are any ways that members of our Guam and Regional Veterans Healthcare Council can provide your office with information to cut cost and a corresponding increase in access to care, to make introductions to organizations that can help provide ways to solve the serious problems that have existed for years, to show how telemedicine can be available for Veteran care at virtually no cost or introductions to capable IT experts to provide options for installing IT systems and software options for Veterans to be register on Guam and the processing time period significantly shorter compared to the lengthy time that has existed for years, please feel free to contact me any time.

Last, in the same manner as the Department of Justice, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and other Federal agencies have turned to the private sector to realize savings, assume risks, use their own financing and be responsible for operations, maintenance and management of their facilities, the same can be done for VA relative to providing our Veterans with the standard of care they not only deserve but have earned.

Thank you very much Wayne.

Peter

Peter R. Sgro, Jr.; Chairman / Founder
Guam & Regional Veterans Healthcare Council

Direct Office: 671.477.4772
Cellular: 671.688.7476
Email: psgro@dpacguam.com

From: <Pfeffer>, "Wayne L." <Wayne.Pfeffer@va.gov>
Date: Wednesday, May 27, 2015 at 3:46 AM
To: PETER <psgro@dpacguam.com>, Craig Oswald <craig.oswald@va.gov>, "thomas.driskil@va.gov" <thomas.driskil@va.gov>
Cc: Richard Cruz <richard.billett.cruz@gmail.com>, Richard Cruz <richard.billett.cruz@gmail.com>, "Jay R. Merrill" <Jmerrill@guam.net>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Death of a Veteran: "The VA and our many successful efforts, ever expanding Guam"

Thank you for your email Mr. Sgro, and truly sorry of your health concerns. I sincerely wish you the best. I wanted to clarify several points in your email. There are difficult recruitment and retention challenges for our Guam CBOC. We aggressively recruit in fact I have authorized recruitment beyond the assigned level for physicians recognizing unexpected vacancies are hard to absorb). We had an unexpected resignation of a physician while we have been recruiting. **Hopefully** we will finalize a replacement soon. I have authorized several physicians from Honolulu to rotate to Guam to ensure adequate coverage as we recruit. We have several rural health teams beginning shortly that we travel to the rural parts of the Island to see Guam Veterans close to home. Recruitments are being successful in this regard.

As to the patient you mentioned, I cannot comment on specific patient conditions, due to HIPPA (privacy) laws, but from review I do not believe the circumstances are as presented. Unfortunately the media offer prints stories without validation. I have a special place in my heart for Guam, in fact I have traveled there more often than any other location, including the Hawaiian Islands. I intend to continue work with the Veteran community, and congressional parties to ensure we provide the best healthcare we can afford. Choice program is developing in Guam, and that should assist with timely access. Sincerely,
Wayne

Wayne L. Pfeffer MHA FACHE
Director
VA Pacific Islands Healthcare system
808 433-0100

EXHIBIT "A"

On May 19, 2015, at 2:40 PM

, _____ wrote:

Re: _____

Below is the secure message I just sent to the Honolulu patient advocate. I posted it to the VA Face book site as well. <https://www.facebook.com/VeteransAffairs?fref=ts>

This is after I spoke to the VA Choice Program Office and the CBOC which both concurred that the Choice Program though not implemented is available to Vets on Guam.

FYI, I had a complete _____ evaluation done in February and we are still waiting for the consult to be approved for my new hearing aids!

From:

EXHIBIT B

Date: May 23, 2015 at 11:17:57 AM GMT+10

I received a response from my secure message to the "Patient Advocate in Honolulu. Here is that response.

Aloha Mr. Mead, I apologize for your perception of uncaring attitude from Honolulu for Guam Veterans. I will be forwarding your concerns to our Rural Health Coordinator, as well as the ACOS, Primary Care.

Joanne T. Strohin
Patient Relations Specialist

Excuse me apologize and forward? That is not a patient relations specialist in my book. How about an I will personally take, follow-up and get you answers type of attitude. My response was not kind.

EXHIBIT "C"

From: PETER <psgro@dpacguam.com <mailto:psgro@dpacguam.com> >
Date: Friday, March 6, 2015 at 8:52 AM
To: Craig Oswald <craig.oswald@va.gov <mailto:craig.oswald@va.gov> >
Subject: Good Morning

Good Morning Craig:

I am looking forward to our meeting today and again want to thank you for arranging this meeting. I hope that I can take a tour of your VA behavioral health ward. Unless there are restrictions, I would like to say hello to a few Veterans from Guam in the acute care area.

I am hoping that I can get some information which I am sure will be more accurate than information we would get on Guam, of course without any names or other personal information:

1. Over the past three years, the number of Guam and Regional Veterans treated for behavioral health issues?

2. The top two behavioral health diagnosis of Guam and Regional Veterans over the past three years, especially those diagnosed with PTSD?
3. The top three diagnosis of Guam and Regional Veterans with acute care health issues over the past three years?
4. The number of Guam and Regional Veterans over the past three years that had to be air-vac from Guam to Tripler?
5. The total cost that VA had to reimburse the Navy for Veterans care at the Guam Naval hospital over the past three years?
6. The total cost to VA for the care of Guam and Regional Veterans at Tripler and other off-island facilities over the past three years?

If there is any possibility of receiving this information within the next two weeks, that would be very helpful in arriving at financial projections for purposes of the top two Guam insurance companies that have contracts with the Federal Government to provide health insurance to non-military Federal employees.

Thank you Craig. I will be arriving about 45 minutes earlier since Tripler is a large facility and want to insure I am at the conference room before our noon meeting.

Regards,

Peter

Peter R. Sgro, Jr.; President and Chairman

International Group, Inc.

Suite 101, South Marine Corp Drive, Tamuning, Guam 96913

Direct Office: 671.477.4772

Cellular: 671.688.7476

Email: psgro@dpacguam.com

EXHIBIT "D"

From: <Olkowski>, "Lynn A." <Lynn.Olkowski@va.gov>

Date: Wednesday, May 13, 2015 at 11:08 AM

To: PETER <psgro@dpacguam.com>

Subject: FOIA Request

Good Day Mr. Sgro,

I am the Freedom of Information officer at the VA Pacific Islands Health Care System, and I am reaching out to help facilitate your request for agency information. If you could please let me know what information you need, and I will process the request for you. Please be specific in describing the data, and what purpose it will be used for. If you should have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

v/r

Lynn A Olkowski

Privacy/FOIA Officer/Records Manager

VA Pacific Islands Healthcare System, VISN 21

459 Patterson Road

Honolulu, HI 96819

(808) 433-3026

CMO Dr. Head
Nurse Manager Bernadette Santos
PACT 1
Dr. Head
RN Rachel Ceria
LPN Jonalyn Surber
MSA Angela Lorenzo
PACT 2
VACANT
RN Rose Santos
LPN Mikelyn Bamba
MSA Anna Eustaquio
PACT 3
Dr. Marzullo
RN Marlyn Pearson
LPN Jayar Calilung
HT Stephanie Bolan-Reding
PACT 4
VACANT <i>DR. SAMANIEGO</i>
RN Anna Itugot
LPN Jennifer Vance
HT Lauren deCiutiis

→ COVERAGE PRESENTLY
 PROVIDED BY THE NEW
 RURAL HEALTH
 EXTENSION TEAM
 DOCTOR SAMANIEGO

STAFFING FOR MD'S HAS BEEN INFLUX FOR THE PAST FEW MONTHS

MAY - DR. HEAD

2014 - DR. CHILDERS (PCS'd LEFT MAY 22)

DR. NGUYEN (LOCUM, HERE FOR 6 MONTHS FROM VA

ASSIGNMENT, VA TEMPORARY TRAVELING LEFT MAY 12

IN APRIL, CBOC WAS AWARE OF MD'S LEAVING SO HONOLULU HAD PUT THE CREDENTIALING PROCESS IN HIGH GEAR. ADDITIONALLY, 2

DOCTORS FROM HONOLULU ARE DETAILED TO GUAM TO ASSIST GUAM (RH EXT TEAM) DR. SAMANIEGO - STARTED 6/1/2015

PACT 3 - DR. MARZULLO - STARTED 6/1/2015

*DR. THOMPSON - MARCH OR APRIL> WORKED A FEW WEEKS AND QUIT (MILITARY DEPENDENT)

NEW DOCTORS IN GUAM HAVE BEEN APPROACHED. NO ONE ACCEPTED

CBOC SERVICES

PRIMARY CARE 4 TEAMS

MENTAL HEALTH

OFF SITE * HOME BASED PRIMARY CARE

MD (pt) * NURSE PRACTITIONER (R)

RN x 2 (ft) * CLERK

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST * SOCIAL WORKER

TEAMS

CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER DR. HEAD

NURSE MANAGER BERNADETTE SANTOS

PACT 1

CMO DR. HEAD

RN RACHEL CERIA

LPN JONALYN SURBER

MSA ANGELA LORENZO

PACT 2

DR. DIANA CHILDERS (O.6

RN ROSEWYNDA SANTOS

LPN MIKELYN BAMBA

MSA ANN EUSTAQUIO

PACT 3

MD VACANT-DR. MARZULLO (team rural)

RN MARLYN PEARSON

LPN JAYAR CALILUNG

HT STEPHANIE BOLAN-REDING

PACT 4

VACANT-DR. SAMANIEGO (team rural)

RN ANNA ITUGOT

LPN JENNIFER VANCE

HT LAUREN DECURTIS

PRIMARY CARE SOCIAL WORKER VACANT

OEF/OIF SOCIAL WORKER KIM PEARSON

SPECIALTY RN MICHAEL CORNWELL

SPECIALTY RN (Specialty/Primary) VACANT

SPECIALTY LPN VACANT

Program Support Asst Francine Baletto

Telehealth Tech Arnold Lucero

C&P Med Admin Ben Beatima

JOAN GIL - LEAD PSYCHIATRIST

RUBY MANALASTAS - PSYCHIATRIST



COMMITTEE ON RULES

I Mina'trentai Tres na Liheslaturan Guåhan • The 33rd Guam Legislature
155 Hesler Place, Hagåtña, Guam 96910 • www.guamlegislature.com
E-mail: roryfor Guam@gmail.com • Tel: (671)472-7679 • Fax: (671)472-3547

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Rory J. Respicio
CHAIRPERSON
MAJORITY LEADER

Senator
Thomas C. Ada
VICE CHAIRPERSON
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Senator
Nerissa Bretania Underwood
Member

V. Anthony Ada
MINORITY LEADER

Mary C. Torres
MINORITY MEMBER

May 26, 2015

MEMORANDUM

To: **Rennae Meno**
Clerk of the Legislature

Attorney Therese M. Terlaje
Legislative Legal Counsel

From: **Senator Rory J. Respicio**
Majority Leader & Rules Chair

Subject: **Referral of Resolution No. 111-33 (COR)**

As Chairperson of the Committee on Rules, I am forwarding my referral of Resolution No. 111-33 (COR). Please ensure that the subject resolution is referred, in my name, to the respective sponsor, as shown on the attachment.

I also request that the same be forwarded to all Senators of *I Mina'trentai Tres Na Liheslaturan Guåhan*.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact our office at 472-7679.

Si Yu'os ma'åse!

(1) Attachment

I Mina Trentai Tres Na Liheslaturan Guåhan
Resolutions Log Sheet

Resolution No.	Sponsor	Title	Date Intro	Date of Presentation	Date Referred	Committee / Ofc Referred	PUBLIC HEARING DATE	DATE COMMITTEE REPORT FILED	Date Adopted
111-33 (COR)	FRANK B. AGUON, JR. T. C. Ada Tommy Morrison	Relative to requesting Guam's Delegate to the Congress of the United States to call for an investigation from the Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General to substantiate allegations into access barriers adversely affecting the quality of primary and specialty care, and mismanagement at the Veterans Affairs Guam Community Based Outpatient Clinic and the Guam Vet Center.	05/22/15 10:46 a.m.		05/26/15	Sponsor			



Office of Senator Frank B. Aguon, Jr. <admin@frankaguonjr.com>

1ST NOTICE: Public Hearing on Tuesday, June 23, 2015 at 5:00 P.M.

Office of Senator Frank Aguon, Jr. Admin <admin@frankaguonjr.com> Tue, Jun 16, 2015 at 10:01 AM

To: "Office of Senator Frank B. Aguon, Jr." <admin@frankaguonjr.com>

Cc: "Senator Frank B. Aguon Jr." <aguon4guam@gmail.com>, Committee <committee@frankaguonjr.com>, Ivan Palacios <communications@frankaguonjr.com>, Lourdes Eclavea <staff@frankaguonjr.com>, Senator Aguon's Assistant <officeassistant@frankaguonjr.com>, Tricia Benavente <media@frankaguonjr.com>

Bcc: antoniot@guamairport.net, arthur.paulino@gpd.guam.gov, bobcamacho@guamairport.net, chuck.ada@guamairport.net, cimiculka@guam.gannett.com, cme.guam@gmail.com, communications@guam.gov, dcaguero@portguam.com, ebanderson@guamag.org, elaine.gogue@guam.gov, emiller@guampdsc.net, eric.fisher@gpd.guam.gov, euntalan@fhh.com, faguon@portguam.com, governor@guam.gov, guamwardeny2k@yahoo.com, janela@spbgum.com, joey.sannicolas@gfd.guam.gov, joseph.i.cruz@gpd.guam.gov, madeleine.bordallo@mail.house.gov, matt.sablan12@yahoo.com, michael.cura@dpr.guam.gov, michael.uncangco@gfd.guam.gov, philip.taijeron@cqa.guam.gov, phnotice@guamlegislature.org, "Raffaele.sgambelluri@cqa.guam.gov" <raffaele.sgambelluri@cqa.guam.gov>, raymond.blas@dpr.guam.gov, robert@mvguam.com, Carla Borja <carla.borja@doc.guam.gov>, "chris.duenas" <chris.duenas@guam.gov>, Christopher Budasi <cbudasi@guamcourts.org>, "clynt@spbgum.com" <clynt@spbgum.com>, Cynthia Ige <cynthia.ige@gpd.guam.gov>, "Honorable Robert J. Torres" <guamjustice@hotmail.com>, "hottips@kuam.com" <hottips@kuam.com>, Jon Calvo <jon.calvo@mail.house.gov>, "jose.sanagustin" <jose.sanagustin@doc.guam.gov>, "Joseph I. Cruz" <joseph.i.cruz66@gmail.com>, "joseph.duenas" <joseph.duenas@guam.gov>, Joshua Tenorio <jtenorio@guamcourts.org>, Joy Unpingco <joy.unpingco@guam.gov>, Ken Quintanilla <kenq@kuam.com>, kim santos <kim.santos@gpd.guam.gov>, "Lt. Paul Sayama" <paul.sayama@gpd.guam.gov>, "manuel.babauta" <manuel.babauta@gpd.guam.gov>, Mark Calvo <mark.calvo@guam.gov>, Maurice Sayama <maurice.sayama@gpd.guam.gov>, "monica.salas" <monica.salas@gpd.guam.gov>, "mvariety@pticom.com" <mvariety@pticom.com>, "news@guampdn.com" <news@guampdn.com>, "Pedro A. Leon Guerrero, Jr." <pedro.leonguerrero@cqa.guam.gov>, Ray Tenorio <ray.tenorio@guam.gov>, "ronald.taitano" <ronald.taitano@gpd.guam.gov>, Rose Ramsey <rose.ramsey@guam.gov>, Shawn Raymundo <rraymundo@guam.gannett.com>, "susan.reyes" <susan.reyes@gpd.guam.gov>, Valerie Cruz <vcruz@guamcourts.org>, agatmayorsoffice@hotmail.com, "Alan G. Van Aken" <agunner77@teleguam.net>, alegionguam@yahoo.com, alwin.rafael@va.gov, bjmerenda@yahoo.com, celine.sanchez@us.army.mil, cil_m@hotmail.com, edward.santos2@va.gov, Guam.RAO@gmail.com, Guam.RAO@us.af.mil, hagatnamayor@hotmail.com, harold.kirk@med.navy.mil, idaycab@yahoo.com, jcbblas@nikkogum.com, Jesse.Salas@fe.navy.mil, jgrivera1949@ymail.com, jnbatulai@guam.net, john.blas@westcare.com, joyimar13@yahoo.com, kenjoeada@yahoo.com, kones.r@gmail.com, Lee Bamby <leembamby@gmail.com>, mayormcdonald@hotmail.com, MCPOShimizu@yahoo.com, mmendiola159@gmail.com, nancy.t.kuper.ctr@mail.mil, norma.castillon@gmail.com, peter_daigo@hotmail.com, pitimayor@yahoo.com, psgro@dpacguam.com, rgibson@k57.com, ritalynn_flores@yahoo.com, rodney.cruz@va.gov, talofofomayor@gmail.com, tsguam@hotmail.com, varoguam1@yahoo.com, victor.dunga@va.gov, wwbradford@live.com, Adam Carbullido <adam.carbullido@mail.house.gov>, "Adolf P. Sgambelluri" <olyman@gmail.com>, Alex Rhowuniong <production@joyfmradio.net>, Aline Yamashita <aline4families@gmail.com>, Anthony Sanchez <yigovice@gmail.com>, "Baletto, Francine T." <Francine.Baletto@va.gov>, Barrigada MayorsOffice <broadmin@teleguam.net>, Barry Mead <bigb@teleguam.net>, Benjamin Palacios <bcpeagle69@gmail.com>, Benjamin Palacios <benpalacio@aol.com>, bill.cundiff <afcmstg24@yahoo.com>, cindy.gogo <gogocindy69@gmail.com>, Dale Alvarez <dalealvarez@gmail.com>, Dan Perez <danperez671@gmail.com>, Daniel Mendiola <dmendiola@teleguam.net>, David Ehlers <ehlersd58@gmail.com>, Dennis Borja <guamg8r@yahoo.com>, Diron Cruz <diron.cruz@hotmail.com>, Doris Lujan <mayordorisfloreslujan@gmail.com>, "Dr. Helene Head" <helene.head2@va.gov>, Duane M George <dmgeorge@guam.gannett.com>, Enrique Agustin <rick.agustin@grta.guam.gov>, Ernest Chargualaf - Merizo <mayoremestc@yahoo.com>, "Frank N. Salas" <googat@yahoo.com>, Guam USAF Veteran <gusafva@gmail.com>, guambully01 <guambully@gmail.com>, Harold Kirk <harold.joe59@yahoo.com>, Jennifer Lee Naputi <jbazanaputi@gmail.com>, Jesse Fredericksen <jesse.fredericksen@va.gov>, Jessy Gogue

<ocp.mayor@gmail.com>, "Joaquin Santos, Jr." <joaquin.santosjr@yahoo.com>, Joe Kamudo <joe_kamudo@yahoo.com>, Joleen Certeza <jacerteza@yahoo.com>, Josephine Blas <joblas67@gmail.com>, "Josephine M. Laniog" <joafvet@hotmail.com>, Juan Finona <juan_finona@yahoo.com>, "Lester L. VBAHONO Stahli" <lester.stahli@va.gov>, Manglona Martin <martin_manglona@yahoo.com>, Margaret Blas <jmcbblas@gmail.com>, Marlene Slomka <marlene.slomkams@gmail.com>, "Mayor Louise C. Rivera" <mayorlcrivera.tatuha@gmail.com>, MELISSA SAVARES <melissa.savares@gmail.com>, Richard Taitague <richard.taitague.ctr@fe.navy.mil>, Rick Cruz <richardcruz@teleguam.net>, Rikki Orsini <orsini.rikki@gmail.com>, Robert Hofmann <guammayor@gmail.com>, Rodney Cruz <rodneycruzjr@hotmail.com>, rquinatamoph <rquinatamoph@teleguam.net>, rudy iriarte <rudyiriarte@gmail.com>, "Santos, Bernadette S." <bernadette.santos@va.gov>, Sarah Mv Thomas Nededog <sarahtn56@gmail.com>, Sarah Thomas-Nededog <sarah.thomasnededog@westcare.com>, Stan Ko <stanstw@hotmail.com>, Team TATUHA 2013 <teamtatuha2013@gmail.com>, "Thomas F. Devlin" <mophtd@ite.net>, Tony Rabon <tonyrabon671@gmail.com>, Umatac Mayor <umatacmo@gmail.com>, Vice Mayor KC Santos <vicemayorkcsantos.tatuha@gmail.com>

June 16, 2015

MEMORANDUM

**To: ALL SENATORS, MEDIA, AND STAKEHOLDERS
ALL VETERANS STAKEHOLDERS**

Fr: SENATOR FRANK B, AGUON, JR.

Chairman, Guam U.S. Military Relocation, Public Safety, and Judiciary

Subject: 1ST NOTICE: Public Hearing on Tuesday, June 23, 2015 at 5:00 P.M.

In accordance with the *Open Government Law of Guam*, relative to notice for public meetings, please be advised that the *Committee on Guam U.S. Military Relocation, Public Safety & Judiciary*, will convene a **Public Hearing on Tuesday, June 23, 2015 at 5:00 P.M.** Included on the agenda is the following resolution:

- **Resolution No. 111-33 (COR)** - Relative to requesting Guam's Delegate to the Congress of the United States to call for an investigation from the Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General to substantiate allegations into access barriers adversely affecting the quality of primary and specialty care, and mismanagement at the Veterans Affairs Guam Community Based Outpatient Clinic and the Guam Vet Center. (*Sponsors: Senator Frank B. Aguon, Jr., Senator Thomas C. Ada, Senator Tommy Morrison*)

❖ Copies of the aforementioned Bill(s) may be obtained at *I Liheslaturan Guahan*'s website at: www.guamlegislature.com.

❖ The Hearing will broadcast on local television, *GTA Channel 21 and Docomo Channel 117* or streamed online at: www.guamlegislature.com.

The Committee encourages our local veterans who have experienced access barriers adversely affecting their

quality of primary and specialty care and/or experiences of mismanagement with the services at the Guam CBOC and the Guam Vet Center, to provide oral and/or written testimony at the public hearing or submit written testimonies one day prior to the public hearing date, to the following :

- **Office of Senator Frank B. Aguon, Jr.**
 - Suite 503 DNA Bldg. 238 Archbishop Flores St. Hagåtña, Guam; or
 - Fax to: 671- 475-GUM3(4863); or
 - Email to: aguon4guam@gmail.com or committee@frankaguonjr.com.

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, individuals requiring special accommodations, auxiliary aids, or services should contact Kevin Perez at 475-4861/2 or email at : committee@frankaguonjr.com. Please feel free to contact my office should you have any additional questions or concerns.

Thanks!

Office of Senator Frank B. Aguon, Jr.

Committee on Guam US Military Relocation, Public Safety, and Judiciary

SUITE 503, DNA BLDG. 238 ARCHBISHOP FLORES STREET HAGÁTÑA, GUAM 96910

Tel: (671) 475-GUM1/2 (4861/2)

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aguon4guam@gmail.com | www.frankaguonjr.com

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2 attachments

 **1st Notice - VETERANS Public Notice Jun23.pdf**
780K

 **1st Notice - Public Notice Jun23.pdf**
778K



June 16, 2015

MEMORANDUM

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Respectfully,

Handwritten signature of Senator Frank B. Aguon, Jr.

SENATOR FRANK B. AGUON, JR.
Committee Chairman of Guam U.S. Military Relocation | Public Safety | Judiciary
I Mina' Trentai Tres Na Liheslaturan Guahan | 33RD Guam Legislature

Senator FRANK B. AGUON, JR. Chairman

Senator Thomas C. Ada Vice Chairman

Vice-Speaker Benjamin J.F. Cruz Member

Senator Rory J. Respicio Member

Senator Dennis G. Rodriguez, Jr. Member

Senator Dr. Nerissa B. Underwood, Ph.D. Member

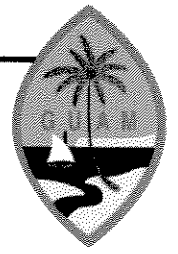
Senator V. Anthony Ada Member

Senator Frank F. Blas Jr. Member

Senator James V. Espaldon Member

Senator Brant T. McCreadie Member

Speaker Dr. Judith T. Won Pat Ed.D Ex-Officio



June 16, 2015

MEMORANDUM

To: ALL SENATORS, MEDIA, AND STAKEHOLDERS
Fr: SENATOR FRANK B, AGUON, JR.
Chairman, Guam U.S. Military Relocation, Public Safety, and Judiciary
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Handwritten signature of Senator Frank B. Aguon, Jr.
SENATOR FRANK B. AGUON, JR.
Committee Chairman on Guam U.S. Military Relocation | Public Safety | Judiciary
I Mina' Trentai Tres Na Liheslaturan Guahan | 33rd Guam Legislature

Senator FRANK B. AGUON, JR. Chairman

Senator Thomas C. Ada Vice Chairman

Vice-Speaker Benjamin J.F. Cruz Member

Senator Rory J. Respicio Member

Senator Dennis G. Rodriguez, Jr. Member

Senator Dr. Nerissa B. Underwood, Ph.D. Member

Senator V. Anthony Ada Member

Senator Frank F. Blas Jr. Member

Senator James V. Espaldon Member

Senator Brant T. McCreddie Member

Speaker Dr. Judith T. Won Pat. Ed.D Ex-Officio



Mina' Trentai Tres Na Liheslaturan Guahan
33rd Guam Legislature
OFFICE OF SENATOR FRANK B. AGUON, JR.
Chairman, Committee on Guam US Military Relocation,
Public Safety and Judiciary

Public Hearing
TUESDAY, June 23, 2015 | 5:00PM

AGENDA

Resolution No. 111-33 (COR) - Relative to requesting Guam's Delegate to the Congress of the United States to call for an investigation from the Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General to substantiate allegations into access barriers adversely affecting the quality of primary and specialty care, and mismanagement at the Veterans Affairs Guam Community Based Outpatient Clinic and the Guam Vet Center. (Sponsors: F. B. Aguon, Jr., T. C. Ada, and T. A. Morrison)

The Public hearing will be broadcasted on Docomo Pacific TV Channel 117 or GUdTV Channel 21 or streamed online at: www.guamlegislature.com.

The Committee encourages our local veterans who have experienced access barriers adversely affecting their quality of primary and specialty care and/or experiences of mismanagement with the services at the Guam CBOC and the Guam Vet Center, to provide oral and/or written testimony at the public hearing or submit written testimonies one day prior to the public hearing date, to the Office of Senator Frank B. Aguon, Jr. at Suite S01 DNA Bldg. 238 Archbishop Flores St. Hagatña, Guam, or via fax to 475-GUM3(4863), or via email to: aguon4guam@gmail.com.

If you require any special accommodations, please contact the Office of Senator Frank B. Aguon, Jr. at 475-GUM1/2 (4861/2) or e-mail: committee@frankaguonjr.com.

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Office of Senator Frank B. Aguon, Jr. <admin@frankaguonjr.com>

2ND Notice - Public Hearing on Tuesday, June 23, 2015 at 5:00 P.M.

Office of Senator Frank Aguon, Jr. Admin <admin@frankaguonjr.com>

Thu, Jun 18, 2015 at 8:02 AM

To: "Office of Senator Frank B. Aguon, Jr." <admin@frankaguonjr.com>

Cc: Committee <committee@frankaguonjr.com>, Ivan Palacios <communications@frankaguonjr.com>, Lourdes Eclavea <staff@frankaguonjr.com>, Senator Aguon's Assistant <officeassistant@frankaguonjr.com>, "Senator Frank B. Aguon Jr." <aguon4guam@gmail.com>, Tricia Benavente <media@frankaguonjr.com>, Tom Ada <tom@senatorada.org>

Bcc: antoniot@guamairport.net, arthur.paulino@gpd.guam.gov, bobcamacho@guamairport.net, chuck.ada@guamairport.net, cimiculka@guam.gannett.com, cme.guam@gmail.com, communications@guam.gov, dcaguero@portguam.com, ebanderson@guamag.org, elaine.gogue@guam.gov, emiller@guampdsc.net, eric.fisher@gpd.guam.gov, euntalan@fbb.com, faguon@portguam.com, governor@guam.gov, guamwardeny2k@yahoo.com, janela@spbgum.com, joey.sannicolas@gfd.guam.gov, joseph.i.cruz@gpd.guam.gov, madeleine.bordallo@mail.house.gov, matt.sablan12@yahoo.com, michael.cura@dpr.guam.gov, michael.uncangco@gfd.guam.gov, philip.tajeron@cqa.guam.gov, phnotice@guamlegislature.org, "Raffaele.sgambelluri@cqa.guam.gov" <raffaele.sgambelluri@cqa.guam.gov>, raymond.blas@dpr.guam.gov, robert@mvguam.com, Carla Borja <carla.borja@doc.guam.gov>, "chris.duenas" <chris.duenas@guam.gov>, Christopher Budasi <cbudasi@guamcourts.org>, "clynt@spbgum.com" <clynt@spbgum.com>, Cynthia Ige <cynthia.ige@gpd.guam.gov>, "Honorable Robert J. Torres" <guamjustice@hotmail.com>, "hottips@kuam.com" <hottips@kuam.com>, Jon Calvo <jon.calvo@mail.house.gov>, "jose.sanagustin" <jose.sanagustin@doc.guam.gov>, "Joseph I. Cruz" <joseph.i.cruz66@gmail.com>, "joseph.duenas" <joseph.duenas@guam.gov>, Joshua Tenorio <jtenorio@guamcourts.org>, Joy Unpingco <joy.unpingco@guam.gov>, Ken Quintarilla <kenq@kuam.com>, kim.santos <kim.santos@gpd.guam.gov>, "Lt. Paul Sayama" <paul.sayama@gpd.guam.gov>, "manuel.babauta" <manuel.babauta@gpd.guam.gov>, Mark Calvo <mark.calvo@guam.gov>, Maurice Sayama <maurice.sayama@gpd.guam.gov>, "monica.salas" <monica.salas@gpd.guam.gov>, "mvariety@pticom.com" <mvariety@pticom.com>, "news@guampdn.com" <news@guampdn.com>, "Pedro A. Leon Guerrero, Jr." <pedro.leonguerrero@cqa.guam.gov>, Ray Tenorio <ray.tenorio@guam.gov>, "ronald.taitano" <ronald.taitano@gpd.guam.gov>, Rose Ramsey <rose.ramsey@guam.gov>, Shawn Raymundo <rraymundo@guam.gannett.com>, "susan.reyes" <susan.reyes@gpd.guam.gov>, Valerie Cruz <vcruz@guamcourts.org>, agatmayorsoffice@hotmail.com, "Alan G. Van Aken" <agunner77@teleguam.net>, alegionguam@yahoo.com, alwin.rafael@va.gov, bjmerenda@yahoo.com, celine.sanchez@us.army.mil, cil_m@hotmail.com, edward.santos2@va.gov, Guam.RAO@gmail.com, Guam.RAO@us.af.mil, hagatnamayor@hotmail.com, harold.kirk@med.navy.mil, idaycab@yahoo.com, jcbias@nikkogum.com, Jesse.Salas@fe.navy.mil, jgrivera1949@gmail.com, jnbatulai@guam.net, john.blas@westcare.com, joyimar13@yahoo.com, kenjoeada@yahoo.com, kones.r@gmail.com, Lee Bamby <leembamby@gmail.com>, mayormcdonald@hotmail.com, MCPOShimizu@yahoo.com, mmendiola159@gmail.com, nancy.t.kuper.ctr@mail.mil, norma.castillon@gmail.com, peter_daigo@hotmail.com, pitimayor@yahoo.com, psgro@dpacguam.com, rgibson@k57.com, ritallynn_flores@yahoo.com, rodney.cruz@va.gov, talofofomayor@gmail.com, tsiguam@hotmail.com, varoguam1@yahoo.com, victor.dunga@va.gov, wwbradford@live.com, Adam Carbullido <adam.carbullido@mail.house.gov>, "Adolf P. Sgambelluri" <olyman@gmail.com>, Alex Rhowunioing <production@joyfmradio.net>, Aline Yamashita <aline4families@gmail.com>, Anthony Sanchez <yigovice@gmail.com>, "Baletto, Francine T." <Francine.Baletto@va.gov>, Barrigada MayorsOffice <bmoadmin@teleguam.net>, Barry Mead <bigb@teleguam.net>, Benjamin Palacios <bcpeagle69@gmail.com>, Benjamin Palacios <benpalacio@aol.com>, bill.cundiff <afcmstg24@yahoo.com>, cindy.gogo <gogocindy69@gmail.com>, Dale Alvarez <daleealvarez@gmail.com>, Dan Perez <danperez671@gmail.com>, Daniel Mendiola <dmendiola@teleguam.net>, David Ehlers <ehlersd58@gmail.com>, Dennis Borja <guamg8r@yahoo.com>, Diron Cruz <diron.cruz@hotmail.com>, Doris Lujan <mayordorisfloreslujan@gmail.com>, "Dr. Helene Head" <helene.head2@va.gov>, Duane M George <dmgeorge@guam.gannett.com>, Enrique Agustin <rick.agustin@grta.guam.gov>, Ernest Chargualaf - Merizo <mayoremestc@yahoo.com>, "Frank N. Salas" <goagat@yahoo.com>, Guam USAF Veteran <gusafva@gmail.com>, guambully01 <guambully@gmail.com>, Harold Kirk <harold.joe59@yahoo.com>, Jennifer

Lee Naputi <jbazanaputi@gmail.com>, Jesse Fredericksen <jesse.fredericksen@va.gov>, Jessy Gogue <ocp.mayor@gmail.com>, "Joaquin Santos, Jr." <joaquin.santosjr@yahoo.com>, Joe Kamudo <joe_kamudo@yahoo.com>, Joleen Certeza <jacerteza@yahoo.com>, Josephine Blas <joblas67@gmail.com>, "Josephine M. Laniog" <joafvet@hotmail.com>, Juan Finona <juan_finona@yahoo.com>, "Lester L. VBAHONO Stahli" <lester.stahli@va.gov>, Manglona Martin <martin_manglona@yahoo.com>, Margaret Blas <jmcbblas@gmail.com>, Marlene Slomka <marlene.slomkams@gmail.com>, "Mayor Louise C. Rivera" <mayorlcrivera.tatuha@gmail.com>, MELISSA SAVARES <melissa.savares@gmail.com>, Richard Taitague <richard.taitague.ctr@fe.navy.mil>, Rick Cruz <richardcruz@teleguam.net>, Rikki Orsini <orsini.rikki@gmail.com>, Robert Hofmann <guammayor@gmail.com>, Rodney Cruz <rodneycruzjr@hotmail.com>, rquinatamoph <rquinatamoph@teleguam.net>, rudy iriarte <rudyiriarte@gmail.com>, "Santos, Bernadette S." <bernadette.santos@va.gov>, Sarah Mv Thomas Nededog <sarahtn56@gmail.com>, Sarah Thomas-Nededog <sarah.thomasnededog@westcare.com>, Stan Ko <stanstw@hotmail.com>, Team TATUHA 2013 <teamtatuha2013@gmail.com>, "Thomas F. DeVin" <mophtd@ite.net>, Tony Rabon <tonyrabon671@gmail.com>, Umatac Mayor <umatacmo@gmail.com>, Vice Mayor KC Santos <vicemayorkcsantos.tatuha@gmail.com>

June 18, 2015

MEMORANDUM

To: ALL SENATORS, MEDIA, AND STAKEHOLDERS

ALL VETERANS STAKEHOLDERS

Fr: SENATOR FRANK B, AGUON, JR.

Chairman, Guam U.S. Military Relocation, Public Safety, and Judiciary

Subject: 2ND Notice – Public Hearing on Tuesday, June 23, 2015 at 5:00 P.M.

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❖ Copies of the aforementioned Bill(s) may be obtained at *I Liheslaturan Guahån*'s website at: www.guamlegislature.com.

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 - **Fax to: 671- 475-GUM3(4863); or**
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--

Thanks!

Office of Senator Frank B. Aguon, Jr.

Committee on Guam US Military Relocation, Public Safety, and Judiciary

SUITE 503, DNA BLDG. 238 ARCHBISHOP FLORES STREET HAGÁTÑA, GUAM 96910

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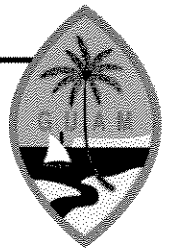
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June 18, 2015

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Committee Chairman on Guam U.S. Military Relocation | Public Safety | Judiciary
I Mina' Trentai Tres Na Liheslaturan Guahan | 33rd Guam Legislature

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Chairman

Senator
Thomas C. Ada
Vice Chairman

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Benjamin J.F. Cruz
Member

Senator
Rory J. Respicio
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Senator
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Member

Senator
Dr. Nerissa B. Underwood, Ph.D.
Member

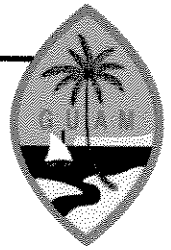
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Ex-Officio



June 18, 2015

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Senator FRANK B. AGUON, JR. Chairman

Senator Thomas C. Ada Vice Chairman

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Senator Dennis G. Rodriguez, Jr. Member

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Senator V. Anthony Ada Member

Senator Frank F. Blas Jr. Member

Senator James V. Espaldon Member

Senator Brant T. McCreadie Member

Speaker Dr. Judith T. Won Pat. Ed.D Ex-Officio



Mina' Trentai Tres Na Liheslaturan Guahan
33rd Guam Legislature

OFFICE OF SENATOR FRANK B. AGUON, JR.
Chairman, Committee on Guam US Military Relocation,
Public Safety and Judiciary

Public Hearing
TUESDAY, June 23, 2015 | 5:00PM

AGENDA

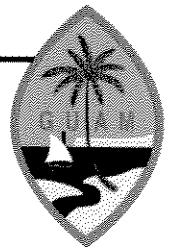
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June 16, 2015

The Honorable Edward J. Calvo
Governor of Guam

513 West Marine Corps Drive
Ricardo J. Bordallo Complex
Hagåtña, Guam 96910

Sent via email to: governor@guam.gov

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Si Ya os Ma'ase

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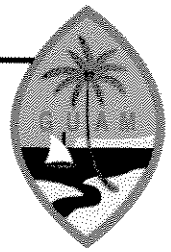
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June 16, 2015

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Ex-Officio

The Honorable Ray Tenorio
Lieutenant Governor of Guam

513 West Marine Corps Drive
Ricardo J. Bordallo Complex
Hagåtña, Guam 96910

Sent via email to: ray.tenorio@guam.gov

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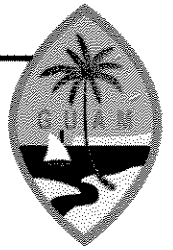
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Si Yafes ivu asel

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I Mina' Trentai Tres Na Liheslaturan Guåhan | 33rd Guam Legislature



Guam U.S Military Relocation | Public Safety | Judiciary



I MINA' TRENTAI TRES NA LIHESLATURAN GUAHAN | 33RD GUAM LEGISLATURE

June 16, 2015

The Honorable Madeleine Z. Bordallo

Guam Delegate

GUAM DISTRICT OFFICE

Suite 107 Capitol Plaza

120 Father Duenas Avenue

Hagatnia, Guam 96910

Sent via electronic email to: madeleine.bordallo@mail.house.gov

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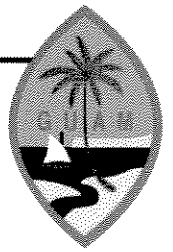
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Member

Senator
James V. Espaldon
Member

Senator
Brant T. McCreddie
Member

Speaker
Dr. Judith T. Won Pat Ed.D
Ex-Officio



June 16, 2015

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Senator
Thomas C. Ada
Vice Chairman

Vice-Speaker
Benjamin J.F. Cruz
Member

Senator
Rory J. Respicio
Member

Senator
Dennis G. Rodriguez, Jr.
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Dr. Nerissa B. Underwood, Ph.D.
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Speaker
Dr. Judith T. Won Pat, Ed.D.
Ex-Officio

Mr. Martin Manglona
Administrator
Guam Veterans Affairs Office
172 S. Marine Corp Drive, Asan, Guam
P.O. Box 5178
Hagåtña, GU 96932
Sent via email to: martin_manglona@yahoo.com

RE: INVITATION — Public Hearing on Tuesday, June 23, 2015 at 5:00 P.M.

Buenas yan Hafa Adai! Please be advised that the Committee on Guam U.S. Military Relocation, Public Safety & Judiciary, will convene a **Public Hearing on Tuesday, June 23, 2015 at 5:00 P.M.** Included on the agenda is the following resolution:

- **Resolution No. 111-33 (COR)** - Relative to requesting Guam's Delegate to the Congress of the United States to call for an investigation from the Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General to substantiate allegations into access barriers adversely affecting the quality of primary and specialty care, and mismanagement at the Veterans Affairs Guam Community Based Outpatient Clinic and the Guam Vet Center. (*Sponsors: Senator Frank B. Aguon, Jr., Senator Thomas C. Ada, Senator Tommy Morrison*)

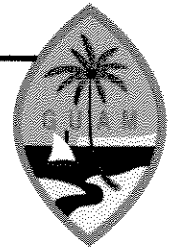
The Committee encourages our local veterans who have experienced access barriers adversely affecting their quality of primary and specialty care and/or experiences of mismanagement with the services at the Guam CBOC and the Guam Vet Center, to provide oral and/or written testimony at the public hearing or submit written testimonies one day prior to the public hearing date, to the following :

- Office of Senator Frank B. Aguon, Jr.
Suite 503 DNA Bldg. 238 Archbishop Flores St.
Hagåtña, Guam; or
- Fax to: 671- 475-GUM3(4863); or
- Email to: aguon4guam@gmail.com or committee@frankaguonjr.com.

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, individuals requiring special accommodations, auxiliary aids, or services should contact Kevin Perez at 475-4861/2 or email at : committee@frankaguonjr.com. We look forward to your attendance and participation.

Si Yu'os Minsel

SENATOR FRANK B. AGUON, JR.
Committee Chairman on Guam U.S. Military Relocation | Public Safety | Judiciary
I Mina' Trentai Tres Na Liheslaturan Guahan | 33rd Guam Legislature
SUITE 503, DNA BLDG. 238 ARCHBISHOP FLORES STREET HAGATNA, GUAM 96910
PHONE: (671) 475-GUM1/2 (4861/2) | FAX: (671) 475-GUM3 (4863) | EMAIL: AGUON4GUAM@GMAIL.COM



June 16, 2015

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Senator
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Speaker
Dr. Judith T. Won Pat, Ed.D.
Ex-Officio

Mr. Rodney Cruz, Jr.

Founder

Iraq Afghanistan Persian Gulf Veterans of the Pacific

222 Chalan Santo Papa,

Reflection Center, Suite 201

Hagatna, Guam 96910

Sent via email to: rodneycruzjr@hotmail.com

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Si Yan os Ma'ase!

SENATOR FRANK B. AGUON, JR.

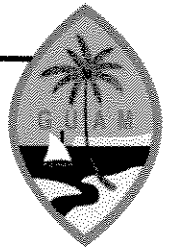
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June 16, 2015

Mr. Bill Cundiff
Chairman
Guam Veterans Commission

Sent via email to: afcmstg124@yahoo.com

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Updated as of June 1, 2015

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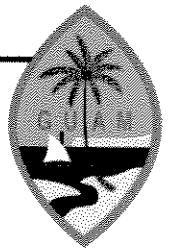
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Updated as of June 1, 2015

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PUBLIC HEARING

Tuesday, June 23, 2015 at 5:00PM

I Liheslaturan Guahan's Public Hearing Room, Hagåtña

AGENDA

- I. Call to Order at 5:00PM
- II. Opening remarks/Announcements:
 - Resolution No. 111-33 (COR) - Relative to requesting Guam's Delegate to the Congress of the United States to call for an investigation from the Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General to substantiate allegations into access barriers adversely affecting the quality of primary and specialty care, and mismanagement at the Veterans Affairs Guam Community Based Outpatient Clinic and the Guam Vet Center. *(Sponsors: Senator Frank B. Aguon, Jr., Senator Thomas C. Ada, Senator Tommy Morrison)*
- III. Closing Remarks
- IV. Adjournment

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Capitol District



Office of
Senator Frank B. Aguon, Jr.

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First Generation Initiatives

May 22, 2015

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Senator Aguon calls on Guam's Delegate to the U.S. Congress to call for the VA Office of the Inspector General to expand their investigations to the Guam CBOC and Guam Vet Center

(Friday, May 22, 2015, Hagåtña, Guam) Looking to address the concerns of Guam's veterans Senator Frank B. Aguon, Jr., alongside Senator Thomas C. Ada, Chairman of Veterans Affairs and Senator Tommy A. Morrison, introduced Resolution No. 111-33 (COR) - relative to requesting Guam's Delegate to the Congress of the United States to call for an investigation from the Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General to substantiate allegations into access barriers adversely affecting the quality of primary and specialty care, mismanagement, and the recent death of an Afghanistan combat-disabled veteran who was denied proper treatment at the Veterans Affairs Guam Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) and the Guam Vet Center.

"Chairman Tom Ada, Senator Tommy Morrison, and myself, on behalf of various Veteran Service Organizations, have called upon Guam's Delegate to the Congress of the United States to call for the VA Office of the Inspector General to expand their investigations with VAPIHCS to the Guam CBOC and Guam Vet Center to improve operational activities relating to data integrity, public contact, mail mismanagement, and other areas of concern," said Senator Aguon. **"Guam's veteran community are disappointed, frustrated, and have lost faith with the VAPIHCS that have not adequately responded to their mental and physical health needs in a timely manner."**

During the December 2014 VA town-hall on Guam, numerous concerns were voiced by our veterans to Mr. Wayne L. Pfeffer, Director, Veterans Affairs Pacific Islands Health Care System (VAPIHCS) and Mrs. Sheila M. Cullen, Network Director, VA Sierra Pacific Network (VISN 21), regarding the waitlist and staffing challenges at the Guam CBOC however, the number of veterans facing extended wait times and staffing challenges continue to exist with the resignation of another Primary Care doctor at the Guam CBOC as of June 1st, 2015.

Senator Aguon further stated, **"Our veterans' community just lost an Afghanistan combat-disabled veteran, diagnosed with severe Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder with Alcohol Dependence who took his own life in May of 2015; and allegations of the denial of proper treatment to the veteran by the Guam CBOC and Guam Vet Center must be investigated."**

Attached: Resolution No. 111-33 (COR)

###

For comments or questions, you may contact the Office of Senator Frank B. Aguon, Jr. at:
475-GUM1/2(4861/2); or e-mail to: aguon4guam@gmail.com.

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75¢

Guam vets call for IG probe

Death of veteran suffering from PTSD prompts requests

By Robert Q. Tupaz
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Variety News Staff

VETERANS groups on Guam and island lawmakers are calling on U.S. Congress and the secretary of Veterans Affairs to investigate conditions at a clinic and at an office tasked with providing care for veterans living on Guam.

In the wake of a self-inflicted death by a veteran known to be suffering from severe post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), lawmakers on Friday introduced a resolution that asks for a probe by the Veterans Affairs Office of the Inspector General.

Guam Legislature Resolution No. 111 asks Guam Delegate Madeleine Bordallo to compel the VAO IG to investigate the Guam Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) and the Guam Vet Center.

The presidents of the Guam Veterans Commission and the Iraq-Afghanistan and Persian Gulf Veterans of the Pacific initiated the correspondence.

Bill Cundiff, president of the Guam Veterans Commission, and Rodney Cruz Jr., president

PROBE continued on page 2



READER POLL

Q: Is it time for new management at the Department of Corrections?

- A:** Yes, there have already been a lot of problems there, and last week's escape was not excusable.
- B:** No, but we need a new prison.
- C:** Both of the above.
- D:** None of the above.

Cast your vote at www.mvguam.com

Q: How would you rate the government's response to Typhoon Dolphin?

- A:** Excellent. They've kept us informed, prepared for the storm and are working as hard as they can to get things back to normal. **23%**
- B:** OK, but they could have done better. **32%**
- C:** Poor. Not enough information, and too slow to respond. **45%**

Total votes: 31
As of 10:30 a.m. May 24

"It is disturbing to hear veterans and individuals working at the Guam CBOC describe the medical center as 'a system that's been overlooked and under-supported,'" wrote Cruz. "Some veterans label the Guam CBOC as a 'prison' due to the nature of its structure in comparison to all other VA health centers nationwide. Nothing is more important than ensuring that our men and women in uniform receive high quality care."

Cruz told Bordallo about the Afghanistan combat disabled veteran who took his life earlier this month. "(He) was diagnosed with severe (PTSD) with alcohol dependence," Cruz said. "A veteran and his family who generously had asked for 'help' from the VA was denied proper treatment."

Cundiff said the deceased veteran's family was let down. "His family felt that he wasn't given the sense of urgency treatment by CBOC and the Vet Center. Without fail, this incident must be inspected by the VA IG immediately," Cundiff stated.

Cundiff and Cruz asked local lawmakers to follow through with their concerns and join them in requesting a VA OIG investigation. Resolution 111 introduced by Sen. Frank Agnon Jr. Tom Ada and Tommy Morrison asks Bordallo to call for an investigation from the VA OIG. "I am alleging into access barriers adversely affecting the quality of primary and specialty care, mismanagement, and the recent death of an Afghanisthan combat-disabled veteran who was denied proper treatment at the Veterans Affairs Guam (CBOC) and the Guam Vet Center."

Agnon stated, "Guam's veteran community are disappointed, frustrated and have lost faith with the VA Pacific Islands Health Care System that have not adequately responded to their mental and physical health needs in a timely manner."

Cruz said Guam veterans are troubled by reports that veterans at the Guam CBOC continue to receive questionable care.

Through it all, Cruz said, "I have learned that love is a being heard by higher powers, month becoming a in court, to his 'sunt' sclerosis, to fighting Arthur's battle with the Supreme Court will the Arthur. Obergefell she happiness with his later in his life. Obergefell to be happy, father, his father said all writing to express support for Mr. Bill Cruz supported Cundiff's claim. "I am of mind. They don't trust CBOC."

of the Iraq-Afghanisthan and Persian Gulf Veterans of the Pacific, both penned letters to Bordallo, island lawmakers and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert McDonald.

In their letters, Cundiff and Cruz said veteran Guam are being shortchanged. In his email letter requesting assistance, Cundiff wrote to McDonald and others, "I am writing in frustration and desperation because our veterans in Guam aren't getting the services they've earned and deserve."

"Ever since our CBOC opened a few years ago, primary care doctors began bailing out before they got fully acclimated," Cundiff stated. "This is an unpardonable trend. Effective June 1st, CBOC will be down to one primary care doctor again. There may be no primary care doctor by that time."

He expressed concern that the shortage in staff is affecting the well-being of CBOC clients. "As a result, appointments are being delayed over and over again. Delays can and will exacerbate the health problems of our veterans," said Cundiff. "(Vets) are very frustrated and have a very apprehensive emotional state of mind. They don't trust CBOC."

Cruz supported Cundiff's claim. "I am writing to express support for Mr. Bill Cundiff's letter to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in concern of the state that the Guam VA Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) and the Guam Vet Center Readjustment Counseling Office has failed to uphold its promise in providing quality care to our island veterans," Cruz said.

Questionable care

Cruz said Guam veterans are troubled by reports that veterans at the Guam CBOC continue to receive questionable care.

UOG...

continued from page 1

When he thinks back to his self, Obergefell said he thinks Jim would be surprised at Jim has been able to do. "I for you," Obergefell said. In his short time on Guam said he's since felt that he should be part of the Guamanian of his connection to the fell's father was an American, one of the liberators. Robert Underwood pointed Obergefell said his father Scabee whose spent much the island watching over prisoners before and after only that, Guamanians pro I believe another reason welcomed so warmly is my fight is all about protection to that. From the be thank you for doing me. Obergefell said.

Obergefell said being a chance to remember his father, "which is my this Memorial Day week said when he came out father, his father said all Obergefell to be happy, later in his life. Obergefell happiness with his the Supreme Court will Arthur's battle with the sclerosis, to fighting in court, to his "sunt" month becoming a being heard by higher powers. Through it all, Cruz said, "I have learned that love is a

Cruz said, "I have learned that love is a being heard by higher powers, month becoming a in court, to his 'sunt' sclerosis, to fighting Arthur's battle with the Supreme Court will the Arthur. Obergefell she happiness with his later in his life. Obergefell to be happy, father, his father said all writing to express support for Mr. Bill Cruz supported Cundiff's claim. "I am of mind. They don't trust CBOC."

Cruz supported Cundiff's claim. "I am writing to express support for Mr. Bill Cundiff's letter to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in concern of the state that the Guam VA Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) and the Guam Vet Center Readjustment Counseling Office has failed to uphold its promise in providing quality care to our island veterans," Cruz said.

Cruz said, "I have learned that love is a being heard by higher powers, month becoming a in court, to his 'sunt' sclerosis, to fighting Arthur's battle with the Supreme Court will the Arthur. Obergefell she happiness with his later in his life. Obergefell to be happy, father, his father said all writing to express support for Mr. Bill Cruz supported Cundiff's claim. "I am of mind. They don't trust CBOC."

US Veterans Affairs, Bordallo respond to concerns of veterans

By Robert Q. Tupaz
 robert@mvguam.com
 Variety News Staff

CONCERNS regarding the state of the Guam Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) and the Guam Vet Center have caught the attention of the U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

According to Bill Cundiff, chairman of the Guam Veterans' Commission, VA Secretary Robert McDonald responded to a May 12 email Cundiff sent sharing concerns about local care for veterans.

In his letter, Cundiff also requested a probe by the Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General.

"I am requesting your intervention to help resolve the retention problem of primary care doctors," Cundiff wrote. "I am also requesting that the VA Inspector General inspect

the Hawaii VA leadership in respect to the services, policies, procedures and treatment of our veterans in Guam. Request the IG also to inspect all Guam offices which provide services to our veterans and their families."

"In his response," Cundiff said, "the secretary shared with me that his direction to the Hawaii (Veterans Affairs) leadership was to respond to my inquiry and work with me on concerns. This is a good window of opportunity – to cultivate an open line of communication and working relationship."

Cundiff said he expects to meet with the Hawaii officials regarding concerns of veterans in Guam within two weeks. Cundiff said he would work within the system through this avenue.

Cundiff said although he carbon copied Guam Delegate

Madeleine Bordallo on the same email letter, he had yet to receive a response from her as of yesterday.

Bordallo did respond to a letter from Rodney Cruz Jr., chairman of the Iraq-Afghanistan and Persian Gulf Veterans of the Pacific. Cruz supported Cundiff's call and penned a letter to Bordallo and island lawmakers echoing the call for an IG probe.

Bordallo response

In her May 21 response to Cruz, Bordallo wrote, "I understand the continued challenges at the CBOC and Guam Vet Center and have been working with the VA and local leaders to find remedies to these problems." Bordallo added, "The VA continues to work to recruit and hire additional medical professionals to care for veterans at the CBOC, and as you know, the

Veterans Choice and Accountability Act enables veterans to obtain care at non-VA facilities if they must wait more than 30 days for an appointment."

Bordallo is on island and yesterday attended Memorial Day ceremonies among other business.

In her Memorial Day statement released to the media, Bordallo stated, "Let us recommit ourselves to ensuring that our nation and our community provide for our servicemembers, veterans and their families in a manner that is worthy of the sacrifices they have made for our nation and our island. God bless our men and women in uniform."

Cruz was not satisfied with Bordallo's response. "The Veterans Choice and Accountability Act has not been effective on Guam and there isn't

a program from the VA that is implemented on the island," Cruz said. "Veterans still have to wait more than 30 days and/or refuse to be treated."

He said veterans need to be heard at the highest level. He called on the legislature to schedule a public hearing on Resolution No. 111-33, introduced by Sen. Frank Aguon Jr. in response to Cundiff and Cruz's concerns.

Resolution 111 asks Bordallo to call for an investigation from the VAO IG "to substantiate allegations into access barriers adversely affecting the quality of primary and specialty care, mismanagement and the recent death of an Afghanistan combat-disabled veteran who was denied proper treatment at the Veterans Affairs Guam Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) and the Guam Vet Center."

Hermes...

continued from page 1

the memory of their sacrifice to protect our way of life."

Bordallo is on island and joined yesterday's tribute at the Guam Veterans Cemetery in Piti. "We also pray for



up to us today to show that this land and these people are worth that sacrifice."

Tenorio welcomed the six-member congressional delegation, some in the audience led by Rep. Mike Rogers of Alabama. Rogers is the chairman of the Subcommittee on Strategic Forces.

"Memorial Day is particularly bitter-sweet for Guam and it's important that



Department of Veterans Affairs

Office of Inspector General

May 2015 Highlights

CONGRESSIONAL TESTIMONY

Assistant Inspector General Tells House Committee on Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee That VA's Purchase Card Program Is at Risk for Waste, Fraud, and Abuse

Linda A. Halliday, Assistant Inspector General (AIG) for Audits and Evaluations, testified before the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, Committee on Veterans' Affairs, United States House of Representatives, concerning the Office of Inspector General's (OIG) work related to VA's Purchase Card Program. Ms. Halliday told the Committee that the number of VA's purchase card transactions is voluminous, the value represents significant financial expenditures, and that overall the OIG considers VA's Purchase Card Program at medium risk for waste, fraud, and abuse. She stated that the OIG's fiscal year 2015 risk assessment of VA's Purchase Card Program identified seven areas of high-risk practices that the OIG will continue to target for oversight. She also discussed recent OIG reports that identified significant control weaknesses that did not prevent transactions involving unauthorized commitments, improper payments, split purchases, and purchases that lacked appropriate supporting documentation, and noted that VA must significantly strengthen internal controls to prevent further misuse of taxpayer dollars intended to serve veterans and their families. Ms. Halliday was accompanied by Mr. Quentin G. Aucoin, Deputy AIG for Investigations (Field Operations), Mr. Kent Wrathall, Director, Atlanta Office of Audits and Evaluations, and Mr. Murray Leigh, Director, Financial Integrity Division, Office of Audits and Evaluations. [\[Click here to access testimony.\]](#)

ADMINISTRATIVE INVESTIGATIONS

OIG Finds Philadelphia VA Regional Office Official Misused Position for Private Gain of Subordinate and Spouse, Invited Staff to Home for Psychic Readings

The Assistant Director, Philadelphia VA Regional Office (VARO), while as the Acting Director, misused her position for the private gain of a subordinate and his spouse, misused her title to endorse the private enterprise, and invited subordinates to her home to take part in psychic readings. OIG also found that she had a less-than-arm's-length relationship with subordinates whom she characterized as friends. As a senior leader, she is held to a higher standard and should set the tone for her subordinates to follow, and establishing personal relationships with a select group of employees within her chain of authority gives the appearance of preference for those few employees. Although OIG found no actual preference, just the appearance of preference diminishes her position and authority as a senior leader. Further, OIG found that the Manager of the Pension Management Center (PMC), failed to report his spouse's income on his 2013 and 2014 Confidential Financial Disclosure Reports, Office of Government Ethics Form 450, which he certified as true, complete, and correct. OIG made a criminal referral of the false statements to the U.S. Department of Justice, but they declined to criminally prosecute in favor of administrative actions. The PMC Manager also failed to

claim that same financial gain on his and his spouse's income tax returns. OIG referred the failure to report income to the Internal Revenue Service and the Pennsylvania State Department of Revenue. [\[Click here to access report.\]](#)

OIG REPORTS

Annual Federal Information Security Management Act Audit Shows VA Still Faces Challenges Implementing Its Information Security Risk Management Program

The Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA) requires agency Inspectors General to annually assess the effectiveness of agency information security programs and practices. In fiscal year (FY 2014), the OIG audited VA's information security program to evaluate its compliance with FISMA requirements and applicable National Institute for Standards and Technology guidelines. VA has made progress developing policies and procedures but still faces challenges implementing components of its agency-wide information security risk management program to meet FISMA requirements. While some improvements were noted, this FISMA audit continued to identify significant deficiencies related to access controls, configuration management controls, continuous monitoring controls, and service continuity practices designed to protect mission-critical systems. Weaknesses in access and configuration management controls resulted from VA not fully implementing security standards on all servers, databases, and network devices. VA also has not effectively implemented procedures to identify and remediate system security vulnerabilities on network devices, database, and server platforms VA-wide. Further, VA has not remediated approximately 9,000 outstanding system security risks in its corresponding Plans of Action and Milestones to improve its information security posture. As a result, the FY 2014 consolidated financial statement audit concluded that a material weakness still exists in VA's information security program. OIG recommended the Executive in Charge for Information and Technology implement comprehensive measures to mitigate security vulnerabilities affecting VA's mission-critical systems. [\[Click here to access report.\]](#)

VA Did Not Comply With Two of Six Improper Payments Elimination and Recovery Act Requirements, Five Programs Did Not Meet Improper Payment Reduction Targets

OIG conducted the FY 2014 review to determine whether VA complied with the requirements of the Improper Payments Elimination and Recovery Act (IPERA). VA reported improper payment estimates totaling approximately \$1.6 billion in its FY 2014 Performance and Accountability Report (PAR) compared with \$1.1 billion in its FY 2013 PAR. The increase was due primarily to higher estimated improper payments for the Compensation and Pension programs under the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA). VA did not comply with two of six IPERA requirements for FY 2014. VBA reported four programs that did not meet its reduction targets. The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) also reported a missed target for one program. Further, VBA did not meet the requirement to publish an improper payment estimate for one program because the estimate was not considered reliable. Additionally, VA's risk assessments should incorporate a stronger consideration of contracting risk. VBA and VHA should make improvements in their sample evaluation procedures. VBA's Compensation program crossed an Office of Management and Budget threshold for

potential designation as a high-priority program due to OIG's review identifying additional improper payments within the sample transactions. Thus, OIG increased the projection of the potential improper payment in VBA's Compensation program. [\[Click here to access report.\]](#)

Review Finds Failure To Timely Diagnose and Treat Patient's Lung Cancer at Martinsburg, West Virginia, VA Medical Center

OIG conducted an inspection to determine the validity of allegations regarding physician leaders' mismanagement and abuse of power at the Martinsburg VA Medical Center (the facility), Martinsburg, WV. OIG did not substantiate the allegations that physician leaders overlooked the medical neglect of a patient, denied transfer of critically ill patients, disregarded specialists' opinions, and gave a nurse authority to delay procedures without informing responsible specialists. However, during the course of OIG's review and separate from the original allegation, OIG found that the facility failed to provide timely diagnosis and treatment of a patient's lung cancer. In addition, the facility did not pursue all required administrative procedures in this case. OIG recommended that the Facility Director ensure that the facility: (1) comply with VHA and facility test results notification requirements, (2) strengthen the root cause analysis process, (3) evaluate the care of the subject patient with Regional Counsel for possible disclosure(s) to the surviving family member(s) of the patient, and (4) strengthen and monitor the peer review process. The Veterans Integrated Service Network and Facility Directors concurred with OIG's recommendations and provided acceptable action plans. [\[Click here to access report.\]](#)

Results for Inspection of Indianapolis, Indiana, VARO

Overall, OIG benefits inspectors found that the Indianapolis, IN, VARO staff incorrectly processed 18 of the 87 (21 percent) disability claims processed. The claims processing errors resulted in approximately \$188,000 in improper benefits payments from October 2009 until September 2014. The OIG benefits inspectors sampled claims considered at increased risk of processing errors; these results do not represent the accuracy of all disability claims processing at this VARO. During this benefits inspection, OIG staff found VARO staff incorrectly processed 13 of 30 claims related to temporary 100 percent disability evaluations. In 10 of these cases, VARO staff delayed scheduling the required VA medical reexaminations despite receiving reminder notifications to do so. VARO staff accurately processed 26 of the 27 traumatic brain injury claims OIG sampled—demonstrating improvement from the OIG inspection in 2011 where 4 of the 20 sample cases contained errors. Thus, OIG determined the VARO's actions in response to the previous inspection recommendations have been effective. However, 4 of the 30 sample cases reviewed relating to Special Monthly Compensation and ancillary benefits contained processing errors. OIG inspectors also determined VARO staff followed policy and accurately established claims in VBA's electronic system of records using correct dates of claims for the 30 claims sampled. However, VARO staff delayed processing actions in 9 of the 30 benefits reduction cases resulting in over \$57,000 in improper benefit payments from October 2013 until September 2014 because management considered other work to be a higher priority. The Director of the

Indianapolis VARO concurred with OIG's recommendations for improvement.
[\[Click here to access report.\]](#)

Results for Inspection of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, VARO

Overall, OIG benefits inspectors found Pittsburgh, PA, VARO staff incorrectly processed 10 of the 84 (12 percent) disability claims OIG reviewed. The claims processing errors resulted in approximately \$496,000 in improper benefits payments from February 2008 until September 2014. The OIG benefits inspectors sampled claims considered at increased risk of processing errors. These results do not represent the accuracy of all disability claims processing at this VARO, however, accountability for public resources is not reasonably assured without timely and accurate actions. During this benefits inspection, OIG staff found VARO staff incorrectly processed 8 of 30 claims related to temporary 100 percent disability evaluations but found all 30 traumatic brain injury claims were processed correctly. OIG noted significant improvement in these two areas since its last review in 2011. Pittsburgh VARO staff generally processed Special Monthly Compensation and ancillary benefits claims accurately, with OIG noting 2 of the 24 cases sampled contained processing errors. OIG inspectors also determined VARO staff generally followed policy and accurately established claims in VBA's electronic system of records using correct dates of claims for 28 of the 30 claims sampled. However, VARO staff delayed processing actions in 5 of the 16 benefits reduction cases resulting in approximately \$42,000 in improper benefit payments from January 2013 until July 2014. The Director of the Pittsburgh VARO concurred with OIG's recommendations for improvement. [\[Click here to access report.\]](#)

Combined Assessment Program Reviews

In May 2015, OIG published three Combined Assessment Program (CAP) reviews containing OIG findings for the facilities listed below. The purpose of the CAP reviews was to evaluate selected health care facility operations. Topics reviewed may vary due to differences in services provided at each facility, the need to follow up on previous CAP findings, or the rotation of CAP review topics over time. The reviews covered the following nine activities: (1) Quality Management, (2) Medication Management, (3) Coordination of Care, (4) Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) Safety, (5) Acute Ischemic Stroke Care, (6) Mental Health Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program, (7) Emergency Airway Management, (8) Environment of Care, and (9) Surgical Complexity.

[VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System, Omaha, Nebraska](#)

[VA St. Louis Health Care System, St. Louis, Missouri](#)

[William Jennings Bryan Dorn VA Medical Center, Columbia, South Carolina](#)

Community Based Outpatient Clinic Reviews

In May 2015, OIG published six Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) reviews containing OIG's findings at select CBOCs and primary care clinics that fall under the oversight of the parent facilities listed below. The purpose of the CBOC reviews was to evaluate four operational activities: (1) Environment of Care, (2) Alcohol Use Disorder, (3) Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) Screening, and (4) Outpatient Documentation.
[VA Roseburg Healthcare System, Roseburg, Oregon](#)

VA Palo Alto Health Care System, Palo Alto, California

VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System, Omaha, Nebraska

VA Boston Healthcare System, Boston, Massachusetts

VA Puget Sound Health Care System, Seattle, Washington

Beckley VA Medical Center, Beckley, West Virginia

ADMINISTRATIVE CLOSURES

As a result of a review of OIG decision-making practices on closing reviews administratively, the Deputy Inspector General instituted a new policy requiring coordination of administrative closures within the Immediate Office of the Inspector General, the Office of the Counselor to the Inspector General, and the Release of Information Office. This process will ensure consistency in decision-making regarding when and how public release of related documents is handled. The Deputy Inspector General also directed a retrospective review of administrative closures by the Office of Healthcare Inspections from FY 2006 to present. Based on this review, OIG has published administrative closure reports on the OIG website, publishing the following two in May.

Healthcare Inspection – Alleged Violation of Patient Rights, Sheridan VA Health Care System, Sheridan, Wyoming

Healthcare Inspection – Consult Management Concerns, Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System, Little Rock, AR

CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS

OIG Investigation Results in Civil Settlement Agreement

An OIG investigation revealed that two co-owners of a California based Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business (SDVOSB) fraudulently secured approximately \$30 million in VA set-aside contracts from the National Cemetery Administration (NCA). The veteran who was listed as the owner of the SDVOSB admitted that he was not in control of the company. Further investigation revealed that the non-veteran co-owner ran the business, which was similar to his former company that had previously been awarded several NCA contracts prior to 2007 (the year NCA contracts became designated as SDVOSB set-asides). The SDVOSB owners signed a Civil Settlement Agreement and agreed to pay VA \$1 million.

Son of Disabled Veteran Indicted for Theft of Government Funds

The son of a disabled veteran was indicted for theft of Government funds after having been previously indicted for the same charge and aggravated identity theft. The most recent indictment is related to a \$111,000 VA contract paid after the defendant's previous indictment and more than \$34,000 paid after his arrest. A VA OIG, Army Criminal Investigation Command, Defense Criminal Investigative Services, General Services Administration (GSA) OIG, Social Security Administration (SSA) OIG, and Small Business Administration OIG investigation revealed that the defendant, using two separate businesses, obtained 15 SDVOSB contracts by using his father's identity and military record without his father's knowledge or consent (the father was not involved in

any way with either business). The defendant fraudulently certified both businesses as SDVOSBs through VA's Center for Veterans Enterprise and GSA's Central Contractor Registration/Online Representations and Certifications Application. As a result, the son was awarded 5 VA contracts and 10 U.S. Army and Air Force contracts. The 15 contracts totaled \$2.7 million with the value of the VA contracts at \$1 million.

Former Ann Arbor, Michigan, VA Canteen Chief Arrested for Theft of Government Funds

A former Ann Arbor, MI, VA canteen chief was arrested for theft of Government funds. A Canteen Service audit revealed a loss of over \$400,000. During a subsequent OIG investigation, the defendant admitted to embezzling more than \$150,000.

Veteran Arrested for Forcible Touching

A veteran was arrested for forcible touching after having been previously arrested for aggravated harassment. Both arrests involved the defendant's harassing behavior of a VA employee at the Buffalo, NY, Community Day Program Center.

Veteran Indicted for Making Threats to a Federal Official

A veteran was indicted for making threats to a Federal official. An OIG and VA Police Service investigation revealed that the veteran was seeking a certain procedure in a non-VA facility located in Florida, although the veteran was a resident of Vermont. VA did not find the veteran eligible for such a procedure, even within the VA system. After the veteran learned that the VA Medical Center (VAMC) denied the consult for the non-VA care, the veteran threatened the Chief of Staff and his family. Specific conditions of the veteran's release included home detention with a location monitoring bracelet and no contact with VA staff or property except through the VA Police Service and the emergency room.

Former VA Fiduciary Arrested for Wire Fraud and Theft of Government Funds

A former VA fiduciary was indicted and arrested for wire fraud and theft of Government funds. A VA OIG and SSA OIG investigation revealed that the defendant stole \$259,563 of VA and SSA benefits from a disabled veteran. During the time the fiduciary embezzled the funds, he knew that the veteran lived in a state veteran's home. Gold and silver coins purchased with the stolen funds were recovered during a search of the defendant's residence.

Non-Veteran Sentenced for Identity Theft

A non-veteran was sentenced to 5 years' incarceration (suspended), 5 years' probation (to include random drug and alcohol screens), and ordered to pay VA restitution of \$19,341 after pleading guilty to theft of identity, theft of services over \$10,000, and theft by deception over \$500. An OIG and state police investigation revealed that the defendant used his veteran brother's identity to obtain controlled substances, health care, and beneficiary travel payments from the Louisville, KY, VAMC.

Veteran Indicted for VA Compensation Fraud

A veteran was indicted for theft of Government funds. An OIG and SSA OIG investigation revealed that the defendant had been in receipt of VA compensation benefits and SSA benefits since 1997, claiming loss of use of both hands and feet due to Multiple Sclerosis. While allegedly suffering from his level of reported disability, the defendant lived an active lifestyle to include participating in a 2008 "Marine Corps Mud Run," playing adult league baseball from 2006 through 2012, working as both a personal fitness trainer and a weight trainer for a high school football team, and assisting with football games. Additionally, surveillance showed the defendant using a wheelchair during VA appointments and then ambulating without aids at area restaurants and bars. The loss to VA is \$1,545,890, and the loss to SSA is \$133,107.

Veteran Pleads Guilty to Theft of VA Benefits

A veteran pled guilty to theft after an OIG investigation revealed that he received VA benefits under two different claim numbers. The court ordered that the defendant pay VA restitution of \$67,665 as part of the plea agreement. An OIG investigation revealed that VA funds for both claims were direct deposited into two separate accounts at different banks and that the funds were subsequently withdrawn from the accounts.

Mother of Two Minor VA Beneficiaries Indicted for Theft of Government Funds

The mother of two minor VA beneficiaries (children of a veteran) was indicted for theft of Government funds. An OIG investigation revealed that the defendant concealed her employment income and her children's Social Security income in order to continue to receive VA benefits. The loss to VA is \$41,170.

Daughters of Deceased VA Beneficiaries Arrested for Theft

The daughter of a deceased VA beneficiary was arrested for theft and other charges. A VA OIG and SSA OIG investigation revealed that the defendant received, forged, and negotiated VA and SSA benefit checks issued after her mother's death in June 2005. The loss to VA is approximately \$110,000, and the loss to SSA is approximately \$63,000.

In a separate case, a daughter of a deceased VA widow beneficiary was arrested after being indicted for theft of Government funds. An OIG investigation revealed that this defendant stole VA Dependency and Indemnity Compensation benefits that were direct deposited after her mother's death in April 2007. This defendant was interviewed and confessed to the theft. Contrary to instructions, she subsequently withdrew additional funds from the account before they could be reclaimed. The loss to VA is \$103,191.

Daughters of Deceased VA Beneficiaries Sentenced for Theft of VA Benefits

The daughter of a deceased VA widow beneficiary was sentenced to 2 years' incarceration, 5 years' probation, and ordered to pay VA \$271,403 in restitution. A VA OIG and SSA OIG investigation revealed that the defendant stole VA benefits that were direct deposited to a joint account after her mother's death in March 1993.

In a separate case, a daughter of a deceased VA beneficiary was sentenced to 33 months' incarceration, 2 years' probation, and ordered to pay \$143,403 in restitution to VA and SSA. A VA OIG and SSA OIG investigation revealed that this defendant stole VA and SSA benefits that were direct deposited to her mother's account after her death in December 2008. This defendant used the stolen funds for her personal expenses.

Widow of Deceased VA Beneficiary Indicted for Theft

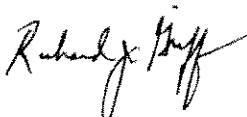
The widow of a deceased VA beneficiary was indicted for theft of Government funds and false statements. An OIG investigation revealed that the defendant failed to notify VA of her 1995 remarriage and continued to receive VA Dependency and Indemnity Compensation benefits until July 2013. The defendant admitted to using the funds for her and her family's personal expenses. The loss to VA is approximately \$126,000.

Former United Parcel Service Employee Sentenced for Theft of VA Drugs

A former United Parcel Service (UPS) employee was sentenced to 3 years' supervised probation, ordered to attend a substance abuse treatment program, and ordered to pay VA restitution of \$1,390 after pleading guilty to theft of Government property. An OIG investigation revealed that between March 2011 and June 2012 the defendant stole VA controlled substances, specifically oxycodone, morphine, hydromorphone, and methadone, from 17 UPS packages.

Veteran Indicted for VA Travel Benefit Fraud

A veteran was indicted for theft after an OIG investigation revealed that for over 9 months he filed 115 false travel vouchers. The defendant claimed to have repeatedly travelled 224 miles roundtrip to attend his medical appointments; however, he was living less than 4 miles from the Spokane, WA, VAMC. The loss to VA is \$10,877.



Richard J. Griffin
Deputy Inspector General

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
Headquarters, Americal Division
APO San Francisco 96374

GENERAL ORDERS
NUMBER 10406

14 October 1969

AWARD OF THE PURPLE HEART

1. TC 320. The following AWARDS are announced.

Awardee: Purple Heart

Unit: 2d Battalion, 1st Infantry, 196th Infantry Brigade APO 96256

Company B
Company C

Section I
Section II

Date action: As indicated in standard name line.

Theater: Republic of Vietnam

Reason: For wounds received in connection with military operations against a hostile force.

Authority: By direction of the President under the provisions of Executive Order 11016, 25 April 1962.

Section I

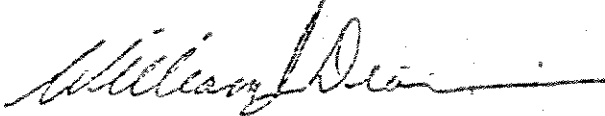
MARTIN, WILLIAM J, 408-48-5917, FIRST SERGEANT (13 June 1969)
FOX, MICHAEL T, 068-42-1897, SERGEANT (26 April 1969)
WERNER, GARY H, 557-62-0606, SPECIALIST FOUR (20 March 1969)
QUIDACHAY, JUAN A, 686-05-6632, PRIVATE FIRST CLASS (8 October 1969)

Section II

TURCKE, THEODORE R II, 181-30-5284, FIRST LIEUTENANT, INFANTRY (22 August 1969)
TUCCILORNE, MARK, 122-36-7709, SERGEANT (10 June 1969)
JACKSON, RONALD L, 241-80-4439, SPECIALIST FOUR (22 March 1969)
REITMAN, JERRY L, 297-44-8508, SPECIALIST FOUR (3 June 1969)
HANSCH, RONALD W, 502-54-0050, PRIVATE FIRST CLASS (13 July 1969)
P/LOS, JOSE S, 489-54-7088, PRIVATE FIRST CLASS (16 September 1969)

FOR THE COMMANDER:

OFFICIAL:



WILLIAM J. DEAN
CPT, AGC
Asst Adjutant General

JOSEPH G. CLEMENS
Colonel, GS
Chief of Staff

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
Headquarters, Americal Division
APO San Francisco 96374

GENERAL ORDERS
NUMBER 11716

13 November 1969

AWARD OF THE BRONZE STAR MEDAL

1. TO 320. The following AWARD is announced.

QUIDACHY, THIAN A 586-05-6532, PRIVATE FIRST CLASS

Company B, 2d Battalion, 1st Infantry, 196th Infantry Brigade APO 96256

Awarded: Bronze Star Medal with "V" Device

Date action: 13 November 1969

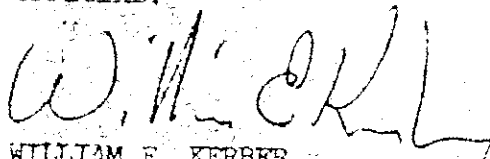
Theater: Republic of Vietnam

Reason: For heroism in connection with ground operations against a hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam. Private First Class Quidachy distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 1 October 1969 while serving as a point man with Company B, 2d Battalion, 1st Infantry. On that date, the company was conducting routine combat operations when an enemy bunker was discovered. After a futile attempt to entice the insurgents out of the emplacement, a hand grenade was tossed into the bunker. Following the explosion, voices could still be heard from within the enemy position. With complete disregard for his personal safety, Private Quidachy, armed only with a .45 caliber pistol, entered the bunker in search of the insurgents. While in the emplacement, Private Quidachy killed one North Vietnamese Army soldier, captured another, and pressured three additional enemy personnel into surrendering. His courageous and timely actions were responsible for the overall success of the mission and provided his commander with valuable sources of intelligence information. Private First Class Quidachy's personal heroism, professional competence, and devotion to duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service, and reflect great credit upon himself, the Americal Division, and the United States Army.

Authority: By direction of the President under the provisions of Executive Order 11046, 24 August 1962.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

OFFICIAL:



WILLIAM E. KERBER
1LT, INF
Acting Asst AG

JOSEPH G. CLEMONS
Colonel, GS
Chief of Staff

Agency responds to veterans' medical-services concerns

Pacific Daily News, Guam 1:15 a.m. CHST May 29, 2015



(Photo: PDN files)

The federal agency which oversees veterans affairs on island yesterday responded to concerns from local veterans about medical services.

The Veterans Affairs Pacific Islands Healthcare System, in a release yesterday, said it's been privileged to serve Guam's veterans since the early 1980s.

"From an initial staff of 5 we have grown to 43 staff members, including 10 physicians for Primary Care and Mental Health, both on board and planned, caring for approximately 3,800 enrolled Guam Veterans," the release states.

However, during a Guam Veterans Commission meeting yesterday, veteran Barry Mead said he questions the VA's numbers.

Several veterans have voiced concerns over the lack of health services on island, including the lack of doctors at the local veterans clinic. Some veterans were told that, by June 1, there would be only one doctor at the veterans' clinic.

The system states in the release, however, that the clinic will be staffed.

There are two primary care providers at the clinic to give primary care services, one of whom will soon be relocating to the mainland, the release states.

"We have one newly hired replacement provider starting on May 31, and for the months of June and July experienced VA providers from Honolulu will be on board in the clinic," the release states.

Contracted physician support is also available if needed.

"There will be no interrupted services for veterans' primary care needs during this period," the release states. "We are pleased to share that a total of five primary care providers will soon be involved in the care of Veterans, hired over the next several months, a considerable but needed expansion of the program."

The system also announced a pharmacist, dividing time between Naval Hospital and the clinic, a social worker, a diabetes nurse educator and a nurse care coordinator within the hospital will be hired soon.

During a Guam Veterans Commission meeting yesterday, several veterans voiced concerns over the medical services they received at the veterans' clinic.

One of the biggest concerns is getting medicine from the VA.

Currently veterans have to get medications shipped to them from Hawaii. But the process isn't quick, some veterans said, and at times they go without medication because of it.

No walk-ins

Another issue for veterans is not being able to see health professionals on a walk-in basis. Veterans who feel sick aren't able to walk in for treatment, and go to the Naval Hospital emergency room.

When they are seen, they're told to go see their primary doctors, which leads them back to the clinic's providers, who aren't able to see them. They are told to wait until they can get an appointment.

Veterans are very frustrated over the lack of help they are getting on island.

Anthony Damian Quenga, a Vietnam veteran, shared how all his medications stopped coming and he needed to take them for various ailments.

He said he tried to get his primary doctor at CBOC to approve a refill of his medications, but wasn't able to just walk in.

"It's ridiculous," he said.

He said the appointment wait time to see doctors at the clinic is too long, especially since he has various health problems.

"All of us in here have made sacrifices. And all I'm asking is I have health issues take care of them," he said.

Veteran Barry Mead expressed his frustration, saying the veterans of Guam are being treated like second-class citizens.

He questioned why the VA doesn't allow walk-in services for local veterans and why programs such as the Choice Card haven't been implemented.

The Choice Card allows veterans to seek private medical services. However, it hasn't been implemented in Guam. The VA has announced it is finalizing a contract with local providers so the card can be used.

Mead also noted that he's been waiting months to get approval from the VA in Honolulu for a new hearing aid.

He said, in this day and age of technology, it shouldn't take very long to get an approval for something.

Bill Cundiff, Guam Veterans Commission chairman, said the dialogue was good and it was important that veterans come together to address their issues.

"We still have a long way to go," he said.

Read or Share this story: <http://www.guampdn.com/story/news/2015/05/28/veterans-jps-0529-rmf/28067493/>

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Office of Senator Frank B. Aguon, Jr. <admin@frankaguonjr.com>

GUAM VETERANS HEALTHCARE: Response to Director of VA Pacific Islands Healthcare System Email Dated Wednesday, May 27, 2015 at 3:46 AM

Peter Sgro <psgro@dpacguam.com> Fri, May 29, 2015 at 8:58 AM
To: "Pfeffer, Wayne L." <Wayne.Pfeffer@va.gov>, "Oswald, Craig R." <Craig.Oswald@va.gov>, "thomas.driskil@va.gov" <thomas.driskil@va.gov>
Cc: Richard Cruz <richard.billett.cruz@gmail.com>, "Jay R. Merrill" <Jmerrill@guam.net>, "juanoblaz@gmail.com" <juanoblaz@gmail.com>, Shelly Santos <shellylynsantos@gmail.com>, Barry Mead <bigb@teleguam.net>, "Ady, Mike" <mike@m80systems.com>, Lee Webber <Lee@mdaguam.com>, William Ray Gibson <breakfastshowk57@gmail.com>, Gina Ramos <gramos@calvos.com>, "Franklin P. Amiola" <franklin.arriola@guam.gov>, Patricia Taimanglo <patricia.taimanglo@gmail.com>, Risha Aguon <rmaguon.imft@gmail.com>, "greglizama@gmail.com" <greglizama@gmail.com>, Nathaniel Berg <nberg@guamradiology.com>, Hoa Van Nguyen <hoavannguyen@yahoo.com>, Hieu Campus <hieu.campus@hotmail.com>, Maureen Maratita <publisher@glimpsesofguam.com>, "George, Duane M" <dmgeorge@guam.gannett.com>, Carlos V Camacho <ironwoodhousing@gmail.com>, "mcruziii@guampdn.com" <mcruziii@guampdn.com>, Cesar Cabot <cc@cmlaw.us>, "Mark.calvo@guam.gov" <Mark.calvo@guam.gov>, "john.j.whitt@mail.house.gov" <john.j.whitt@mail.house.gov>, Edward Untalan <euntalan@fmb.com>, Jacqueline Sablan <jacquelinesablan@gmail.com>, Safa <drssafa@gmail.com>, Eveline Campus <evzee@hotmail.com>, John Setiadi Tan <j.setiadi@setiadiarchitects.com>, Joleen Certeza <jacerteza@yahoo.com>, Benjamin Cruz <senadotbjcruz@gmail.com>, Senator Tommy Morrison <tommy=senatormorrison.com@mail25.atl71.mcdlv.net>, "Cruz III, Manuel" <mcruziii@guam.gannett.com>, "Alan G. Van Aken" <agunner77@teleguam.net>, Dan Perez <danperez671@gmail.com>, Brian Merenda <bmerenda@yahoo.com>, Al Parke <ttsguam@hotmail.com>, John Rivera <jgrivera1949@ymail.com>, Joseph San Nicolas <joe_kamudo@yahoo.com>, Juan Finona <juan_finona@yahoo.com>, "M. Mendiola" <mmendiola159@gmail.com>, "cil_m@hotmail.com" <cil_m@hotmail.com>, Cindy Gogo <cindy.gogo@gvao.guam.gov>, "Edward L. Santos" <edward.santos2@va.gov>, Sarah Mv Thomas Nededog <sarahtn56@gmail.com>, Frank Nededog Salas <goagat@yahoo.com>, Jesse Salas <jesse.salas@fe.navy.mil>, "jesse.fredericksen@va.gov" <jesse.fredericksen@va.gov>, Joaquin Santos Jr <joaquin.santosjr@yahoo.com>, Alex Rhowuniong <production@joyfmradio.net>, Leslie San Nicolas <napujames53@yahoo.com>, "Helene H. Head" <helene.head2@va.gov>, John Blas <john.blas@westcare.com>, John Taitano <jnbatulai@guam.net>, Joseph Foster <fosterjoseph@hotmail.com>, Marlene Slomka <marlene.slomkams@gmail.com>, Diron Cruz <diron.cruz@hotmail.com>, Rick Cruz <richardcruz@teleguam.net>, Richard Taitague <richard.taitague.ctr@fe.navy.mil>, "mophtd@ite.net" <mophtd@ite.net>, John Unpingco <john.unpingco@gvao.guam.gov>, "Rodney A. Cruz Jr." <rodneycruzjr@hotmail.com>, "norma.castillon@gmail.com" <norma.castillon@gmail.com>, Tommy Charfauros <tomas.charfauros@gmail.com>, "Lester L. VBAHONO Stahl" <lester.stahl@va.gov>, Tom Ada <tom@senatorada.org>, "Jr. Admin Office of Senator Frank Aguon" <admin@frankaguonjr.com>, Aline Yamashita <aline4families@gmail.com>, Frank Whitman <frank@mvguam.com>, "news@k57.com" <news@k57.com>, "senator@senatorbjcruz.com" <senator@senatorbjcruz.com>, "senator@tinamunabarnes.com" <senator@tinamunabarnes.com>, "roryforguam@gmail.com" <roryforguam@gmail.com>, "office@senatorada.org" <office@senatorada.org>, "aguon4guam@gmail.com" <aguon4guam@gmail.com>, "senatordrodriguez@gmail.com" <senatordrodriguez@gmail.com>, "senatorsannicolas@gmail.com" <senatorsannicolas@gmail.com>, "senatorunderwood@guamlegislature.org" <senatorunderwood@guamlegislature.org>, "senatortonyada@guamlegislature.org" <senatortonyada@guamlegislature.org>, "marycamachotorres@gmail.com" <marycamachotorres@gmail.com>, "frank.blasjr@gmail.com" <frank.blasjr@gmail.com>, "brantforguam@gmail.com" <brantforguam@gmail.com>, "jespaldonesq@gmail.com" <jespaldonesq@gmail.com>, "info@futuromediagroup.org" <info@futuromediagroup.org>, "Crisostomo, David (dcrisost@guam.gannett.com)" <dcrisost@guam.gannett.com>, "news@mvguam.com" <news@mvguam.com>, "dcrisostomo@guampdn.com" <dcrisostomo@guampdn.com>, "sabrina@kuam.com" <sabrina@kuam.com>, "Paulino, Benny M MG USARMY (US)" <benny.m.paulino.mil@mail.mil>, "juanoblas@gmail.com" <juanoblas@gmail.com>, John Pangilinan <starsportscard@yahoo.com>, Franklin Amiola <franklin.arriola@gmail.com>, Bobby Shringi <bshringi@moylans.net>, Frank Campillo <fcampillo@calvos.com>, Gerry Perez <geap43@yahoo.com>, Shelly

Gibson <sgibson@ite.net>, Vincent Leon Guerrero <vincent.leonguerrero@guam.gov>, Jackie Hanson <managingeditor@glimpsesofguam.com>, Ken Leon-Guerrero <kenleonguerrero@yahoo.com>, logan reyes <loganreyes@gmail.com>

Hi Wayne:

Thank you very much for your email below. I appreciate as the Director of VA Pacific Islands Health Care System that you took the time to write this message below to me. I have noted several concerns and positions in your email message below and offer some suggestions to consider as solutions. I have highlighted in Red for reference certain sentences or parts of sentences in your message the suggestions and / or comments address.

Out of courtesy to you, I want to first state the reason for courtesy copying those in this reply. I believe that transparency fosters positive outcomes. Those of us that started working on just a vision for the development of a private hospital on Guam, also believed in transparency. We informed the media and numerous stakeholders throughout this process in our effort to inform the community of our work over several years. This not only kept our community informed but also clarified any information which was not accurate. Transparency also resulted in additional community support we needed because of the magnitude of what we worked at getting developed. I noted one of your concerns is inaccurate information. I touched on this concern and suggested a solution to this as well.

A. The Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention Act Signed into Law by President Obama and It's Purpose:

- As you may know this Act does not apply to Guam but does for all States for reasons that are not clear;
- This law is aimed at reducing military and veteran suicides and improving their access to quality mental health care;
- The Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans Act, or SAV Act, is named after Clay Hunt, a decorated Marine veteran who, upon his return from combat in Iraq and Afghanistan, struggled with post-traumatic stress. Hunt was wounded in Anbar Province and witnessed the combat deaths of close friends and
- Two years after his discharge and after repeated setbacks in his medical care, Hunt took his own life.

Suggestion: Advocate for an Amendment that includes Guam. It would not be difficult to contact our Congresswoman so she can contact the Chairs of various Congressional Committees VA offices in Washington D.C. And say the Director of Health and Human Services for Region 9 whose office is in San Francisco (I can arrange for that meeting).

B. Suggestions for Investigation of Recent Suicide: NOTE—These suggestions are based on a telephone conversation with one in a position to know of information related to this case. The conversation ended with being told "We Lost A Brother." Please note that these suggestions are based on information provided to me during a telephone conversation with one in a position to know events prior to the incident and some time after.

- Personally meet or speak by phone to those familiar with several details of this case. Can I provide your office number to at least one so you can be called to discuss this yourself directly?
- Acquire and review his registration card issued after discharge and all medical records from the date of discharge to the date of the incident;
- Acquire and review all records or any written materials about the cause of death.
- Determine why the letter "D" is often not used in the word "PTSD" and at times referred to as "PTS" and
- Call for an investigation as to delayed responses after Guam Veterans call the Veterans Suicide Hotline. One of their phone numbers is 1-(800)-273-8255

C. Inaccurate Reporting by Guam Media

Suggestion: I am more than happy to provide you with a list of names and contact numbers of the owners of all Guam media, Publisher and Editor of print media and all broadcast media including reports by radio and/or television

D."to ensure we provide the best healthcare we can afford" and "I have authorized several physicians from Honolulu to rotate to Guam to ensure adequate coverage as we recruit.

Wayne, I had sent by email to Craig a list of members and their titles of our Council after the "Guam and Regional Healthcare Council" was formed and before our first meeting. For purposes of accuracy as to the members of our Council, I personally determined the varying expertise of each member. The selection process also included some members with immediate and direct access to various necessary individuals or companies that are able to foster our goals. This includes individuals and /or companies in Honolulu, San Francisco, Seattle, New York and Washington D.C. Our Senior Advisors include the former Secretary of the Navy and former Director of Health and Human Services. Some other members of our Council are doctors that are Veterans and some that first came to Guam to work at the Naval Hospital, Psychologists, Certified expert in Federal New Market Tax Credits and other Federal tax credit programs, the Dean of the University of Guam School of Nursing, financial analyst and an officer of a major bank, representatives of insurance companies that have expertise in providing Federal healthcare insurance policies, an architect and our research expert that focuses for our purposes, information on Veterans healthcare.

Suggestions: Often experts in various fields chosen to do studies, reports on certain subjects, various developments, financing and other work, are brought to Guam from the mainland. There is a perception that they can produce better outcomes than those that were either born and raised on Guam or have spent years of their lives on Guam. In most all of the various industries, Guam maintains within our own community greater expertise in producing better outcomes. In fact, this is the case with even healthcare matters in the region. In fact, when a Federal RFP was issued to do a report that included a healthcare assessment of the Chuuk Hospital, those that wrote the healthcare assessment were residents of Guam that also went to Chuuk to conduct interviews with all hospital staff and government representatives. My colleague that was also a member of the Healthcare Assessment Team, met the Director of Nursing who was a former student of hers when this Director of Nursing attended the University of Guam Nursing School.

- Meet with officers of various businesses on Guam that for various reasons cut cost without adversely affecting providing services to their customers or clients;
- Meet those doctors on Guam that were able to have 100% of their Federal Medical School Loans forgiven by the Federal Government after only working on Guam for four years;
- Review invoices over a 10 year period that are billed to your office that directly relates to Guam and Regional Veterans care, including without limitation payments to the Navy and Air Force
- Begin discussions with the top two Faith Based Healthcare Organizations to provide more doctors and psychiatrists solely for Veteran Care. This was the recommendation we made to the Federal Government in our Health Assessment report for the Chuuk hospital for management operations, maintenance and recruitment of doctors. Cost reduction was one of our reasons since Faith Based Healthcare Organizations that own hospitals and/ or manage hospitals globally seek a rate of return of between 4% to 7%;
- Compare the cost of your current offices at Tripler to smaller and lower cost office space in commercial buildings close to Tripler;
- Determine the the demand for Veteran care in all areas within your jurisdiction and if the demand is not large enough in those jurisdictions for the number of doctors, transfer them to Guam;
- Guam has a Telemedicine Act which three members of the Foundation I chaired when it was active, wrote the entire Telemedicine law. Utilize grants issued by the Guam office of the Rural Development section of the Department of Agriculture. The Director who was a member of the Foundation I founded is still the Director of this office. Born on Guam, he first worked for the department office in Honolulu. He is allocated

enough grant funds for Telemedicine that does not get used.

- Utilize and have developed software for IT systems that allow Guam and Regional Veterans to be processed for VA healthcare benefits in less than 24 hours right here on Guam rather than wait sometimes for several weeks to be processed in Honolulu. This results if the right IT system including software to lower costs and make it virtually impossible to have data lost.

APPEARANCE OF AT LEAST A 17 MONTH DELAY BEFORE IMPLEMENTATION OF CHOICE PROGRAM FOR GUAM VETERANS:

According to information on the Choice Program contained in the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs website at <http://www.va.gov/opa/choiceact/>, the effective date of the program is referenced by the following sentence—*“Beginning November 5, 2014, the new Choice Program will begin to cover non-VA care for eligible Veterans enrolled in VA healthcare.”* Below this statement are several eligibility requirements but it states that if any one of them does apply to a Veteran, then that Veteran is eligible for the program. Based on one of the sentences contained in your May 27, 2015 email below and a sentence contained in the email of a Veteran marked as EXHIBIT “A,” it appears that Guam Veterans are eligible for the program. That sentence in your May 27, 2015 email to me below states—***“Choice program is developing in Guam, and that should assist with timely access.”*** Assuming there was the delay referenced above to implement the program or any delays in implementing the program, it would appear that there has been delays that should assist Veterans with timely access.

The above referenced possibilities of delays may have occurred as a result of statutory exceptions relative to the program not being available to Guam Veterans for a certain period of time after its effective date. Any delays do not appear to be justified as a result of the time required to enter into agreements with private providers. Insurance companies on Guam that issue healthcare policies, generally take less than Three (3) months to enter agreements with private providers on island and with off-island private providers. In an effort to foster transparency and provide accurate information rather than leaving various points about the Choice Program to assumptions, I suggest issuing a press release to all Guam media and notices to all Guam and Regional Veterans containing information to deem factual. This will also resolve your concerns stated in your email to me below about inaccurate reporting by the media.

Two Employees of VA Pacific Islands Healthcare Systems: Wayne, I would appreciate your help in meeting directly with two employees of your office whose names are referenced in two different email responses below.

1. The first employee is **Joanne T. Strohlin, Patient Relations Specialist**. The response written by Ms. Strohlin to a Guam Veteran is not one expected of an individual placed in the position of a “Patient Relations Specialist.” Clearly her email response indicates a lack of interest to foster patient relations by not taking immediate steps to begin resolving the concern of a Veteran. The Veteran’s email that contains verbatim the response by Ms. Strohlin was sent to those that attended a meeting of the Guam Veterans Commission. The Veteran that wrote this email was not only present at this meeting, but raised several concerns to Commission members during the meeting. I was also present at this meeting at the invitation of the Commission’s Chairman. This Veteran’s emails referenced in this message were sent to practically everyone present at that meeting. He included me as one of many individuals addressed in his emails. You will note in his email a sentence that essentially says: **he had a complete evaluation done in February and to date is still waiting for the consult to be approved . (SEE EXHIBITS “A” and “B”)**

2. The second employee is **Lynn A Oikowski, Privacy /FOIA Officer/ Records Manager**. I sent an email message addressed to Craig on **Friday, March 6, 2015 at 8:52 AM, approximately three hours before our scheduled meeting** at your office at noon on the same day (HAWAII TIME AND DATE). In this email I

thanked Craig for arranging the meeting, listed several questions that call for no names of any patient and asked if the responses could be provided within two weeks. **(SEE EXHIBIT "C")**. When I met Craig at Trippler, he was with a fairly new employee with your office but I do not recall his name. Before going upstairs to the conference room, the three of us had lunch at the patio area of a food court. At no time that I was present with Craig did he raise any concerns about the questions or any reference to anything I needed to do further to receive responses. I received about two months later an **email from Lynn Olkowski which was sent to me on Wednesday, May 13, 2015 at 11:08 AM Hawaii date and time (SEE EXHIBIT "D")**. At no time between Friday March 6, 2015 at 8:52am Hawaii date and time and Wednesday, May 13, 2015 at 11:08am Hawaii time, was I ever asked to submit any further information or provided any instructions in order to get the responses to the questions. **On Tuesday, May 5, 2015 at 5:38 PM Guam time**, I sent an email to Craig expressing my disappointment that responses to the questions were still not provided. In this same email, I expressed delays in care to Veterans, referenced the need for the responses and filing a Freedom of Information Act request to acquire responses to those questions. I also listed various examples of breaches of fiduciary duties to Veterans and resulting liability exposure to VA and personal liability exposure to those responsible for insuring our Veterans have access to care. **I cannot help but feel there is a correlation between explaining liability exposures and the impacts of a class action lawsuit with the email sent about a week after which asked for questions in order to provide responses.**

I hope Wayne that after reading this response, you will be able to recognize that frequently reaching out to Guam and Regional Veterans, frequently meeting with them, providing them assurances in person as the Director of the very agency responsible for their access to care and demonstrating to them that you personally are going to initiate steps to have the Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention Act amended to include Guam, will help foster mitigating the tremendous frustration our Veterans feel.

If you feel there are any ways that members of our Guam and Regional Veterans Healthcare Council can provide your office with information to cut cost and a corresponding increase in access to care, to make introductions to organizations that can help provide ways to solve the serious problems that have existed for years, to show how telemedicine can be available for Veteran care at virtually no cost or introductions to capable IT experts to provide options for installing IT systems and software options for Veterans to be register on Guam and the processing time period significantly shorter compared to the lengthy time that has existed for years, please feel free to contact me any time.

Last, in the same manner as the Department of Justice, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and other Federal agencies have turned to the private sector to realize savings, assume risks, use their own financing and be responsible for operations, maintenance and management of their facilities, the same can be done for VA relative to providing our Veterans with the standard of care they not only deserve but have earned.

Thank you very much Wayne.

Peter
Peter R. Sgro, Jr.; Chairman / Founder
Guam & Regional Veterans Healthcare Council

Direct Office: 671.477.4772
Cellular: 671.688.7476
Email: psgro@dpacguam.com

From: <Pfeffer>, "Wayne L." <Wayne.Pfeffer@va.gov>
Date: Wednesday, May 27, 2015 at 3:46 AM
To: PETER <psgro@dpacguam.com>, Craig Oswald <craig.oswald@va.gov>, "thomas.driskil@va.gov" <thomas.driskil@va.gov>
Cc: Richard Cruz <richard.billett.cruz@gmail.com>, Richard Cruz <richard.billett.cruz@gmail.com>, "Jay R. Merrill" <Jmerrill@guam.net>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Death of a Veteran: "The VA and our many successful efforts, ever expanding Guam"

Thank you for your email Mr. Sgro, and truly sorry of your health concerns. I sincerely wish you the best. I wanted to clarify several points in your email. There are difficult recruitment and retention challenges for our Guam CBOC. We aggressively recruit in fact I have authorized recruitment beyond the assigned level for physicians recognizing unexpected vacancies are hard to absorb). We had an unexpected resignation of a physician while we have been recruiting. **Hopefully** we will finalize a replacement soon. I have authorized several physicians from Honolulu to rotate to Guam to ensure adequate coverage as we recruit. We have several rural health teams beginning shortly that we travel to the rural parts of the Island to see Guam Veterans close to home. Recruitments are being successful in this regard.

As to the patient you mentioned, I cannot comment on specific patient conditions, due to HIPPA (privacy) laws, but from review I do not believe the circumstances are as presented. Unfortunately the media offer prints stories without validation. I have a special place in my heart for Guam, in fact I have traveled there more often than any other location, including the Hawaiian Islands. I intend to continue work with the Veteran community, and congressional parties to ensure we provide the best healthcare we can afford. Choice program is developing in Guam, and that should assist with timely access. Sincerely, Wayne

Wayne L. Pfeffer MHA FACHE

Director

VA Pacific Islands Healthcare system

808 433-0100

EXHIBIT "A"

On May 19, 2015, at 2:40 PM

, _____ wrote:

Re: _____

Below is the secure message I just sent to the Honolulu patient advocate. I posted it to the VA Face book site as well. <https://www.facebook.com/VeteransAffairs?fref=ts>

This is after I spoke to the VA Choice Program Office and the CBOC which both concurred that the Choice Program though not implemented is available to Vets on Guam.

FYI, I had a complete _____ evaluation done in February and we are still waiting for the consult to be approved for my new hearing aids!

From:

EXHIBIT B

Date: May 23, 2015 at 11:17:57 AM GMT+10

I received a response from my secure message to the "Patient Advocate in Honolulu. Here is that response.

Aloha Mr. Mead, I apologize for your perception of uncaring attitude from Honolulu for Guam Veterans. I will be forwarding your concerns to our Rural Health Coordinator, as well as the ACOS, Primary Care.

Joanne T. Strohl
Patient Relations Specialist

Excuse me apologize and forward? That is not a patient relations specialist in my book. How about an I will personally take, follow-up and get you answers type of attitude. My response was not kind.

EXHIBIT "C"

From: PETER <psgro@dpacguam.com>
Date: Friday, March 6, 2015 at 8:52 AM
To: Craig Oswald <craig.oswald@va.gov>
Subject: Good Morning

Good Morning Craig:

I am looking forward to our meeting today and again want to thank you for arranging this meeting. I hope that I can take a tour of your VA behavioral health ward. Unless there are restrictions, I would like to say hello to a few Veterans from Guam in the acute care area.

I am hoping that I can get some information which I am sure will be more accurate than information we would get on Guam, of course without any names or other personal information:

1. Over the past three years, the number of Guam and Regional Veterans treated for behavioral health issues?
2. The top two behavioral health diagnosis of Guam and Regional Veterans over the past three years, especially those diagnosed with PTSD?
3. The top three diagnosis of Guam and Regional Veterans with acute care health issues over the past three years?
4. The number of Guam and Regional Veterans over the past three years that had to be air-vac from Guam to Tripler?
5. The total cost that VA had to reimburse the Navy for Veterans care at the Guam Naval hospital over the past three years?
6. The total cost to VA for the care of Guam and Regional Veterans at Tripler and other off-island facilities over the past three years?

If there is any possibility of receiving this information within the next two weeks, that would be very helpful in arriving at financial projections for purposes of the top two Guam insurance companies that have contracts with the Federal Government to provide health insurance to non-military Federal employees.

Thank you Craig. I will be arriving about 45 minutes earlier since Tripler is a large facility and want to insure I am at the conference room before our noon meeting.

Regards,

Peter

Peter R. Sgro, Jr.; President and Chairman
International Group, Inc.

Suite 101, South Marine Corp Drive, Tamuning, Guam 96913

Direct Office: 671.477.4772
Cellular: 671.688.7476
Email: psgro@dpacguam.com

EXHIBIT "D"

From: <Olkowski>, "Lynn A." <Lynn.Olkowski@va.gov>
Date: Wednesday, May 13, 2015 at 11:08 AM
To: PETER <psgro@dpacguam.com>
Subject: FOIA Request

Good Day Mr. Sgro,

I am the Freedom of Information officer at the VA Pacific Islands Health Care System,

and I am reaching out to help facilitate your request for agency information. If you could please let me know what information you need, and I will process the request for you. Please be specific in describing the data, and what purpose it will be used for. If you should have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

v/r

Lynn A Olkowski

Privacy/FOIA Officer/Records Manager

VA Pacific Islands Healthcare System, VISN 21

459 Patterson Road

Honolulu, HI 96819

(808) 433-3026
